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SCOOP THE WORLD!

B L I T Z

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

GEORGE: THE WHOLE TRUTH

EXCLUSIVE

PLUS

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The Queen Is Dead/Michael Clark Offer/Jane Birkin/Lost In America

F R O N T



COMPETITION WINNERS

The winner of the **BLITZ** Levi jacket designed by Iain R. Webb is Paula Van Hagen from Edinburgh.

The winners of the fifteen **Blue Bossa** albums (July issue) are: Tony Halborn, Brighton; A. Kennedy, WallSEND; Joan Leslie, London SE1; A. Ramsay, London SE11; G. Martin, Hoxby; Dave Moignard, Portsmouth; Steve Roberts, Southport; Dave Sheekey, Ormskirk; Nigel Brand, London SW16; N. Griffiths, Newcastle; James Bedford-Roberts, Chelmsford; Stephen Brandl, Bromley; Neil Dunncliffe, Griffydarn; Caroline della Porta, London N19; Frana Klonarides, London W1.

The Queen is Dead

The Smiths don't like pop promos. At least, Morrissey says he doesn't like pop promos, which is what counts. Rather than simply turn their backs on things flickering, however, they have commissioned Britain's Most Criminally Neglected Film Director, Derek Jarman, to make a short film based on their latest album, *The Queen is Dead*. The songs used are *The Queen is Dead* and *There is a Light That Never Goes Out* and current single *Panic*.

Shot entirely on super 8, with assistance from fellow netherworld super 8 enthusiasts John Maybury, Richard Heslop and Christopher Hughes, the film is more an indication of the kind of pictures that Jarman will be turning out over the next couple of years than any sort of visual outing for The Smiths – the lads themselves do not appear. What does appear is a mesmeric impression of urban UK, trembling, stuttering and flashing colours and images you never saw on pop promos before. As an imaginative collision of perspectives, *The Queen is Dead* – *The Motion Picture* (no, of course it's not really called that) is an engrossing work that merits repeated viewing. As a "promo" device, it will present the TV programmers with a few problems that are too easily solved by pleading that the images are not "broadcast quality" (a euphemism for "insufficiently glossy"; and routinely a euphemism for "ideologically unacceptable to the authorities").

DEMAND a screening on TV.

The film will be going out as a support to Alex Cox's *Sid and Nancy* biopic. Jarman meanwhile has embarked on another super 8 project which will address itself to the New Puritanism which has been sweeping the land these past few years.

It is an appropriate topic for him to settle on, since he has found himself increasingly often at the sharp end of the Puritan offensive.

The new project is travelling under the name *Victorian Values*.

Fingers crossed that it enjoys an easier passage into the world than

Caravaggio had, eh?

Marc Issue

True Stories



True Stories is the name of David Byrne's first feature film as director, made up largely of unusual and significant true stories collected by Byrne out of newspapers – particularly the more oddball types of newspaper: the *World Weekly News*, *Texas Monthly*, and *The (American) Sun*, as well, of course, as *Newsweek* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

True Stories – the film – won't be with us on this side of the Atlantic for a while yet, but here's the *Book of the Film* to whet the appetite. And how. The complete, annotated screenplay, source materials, drawings and storyboards, as well as the impressive collection of photographs by David Byrne himself, Mark Lipson and Len Jenshel. The introduction, moreover, features complementary photographic work by the remarkable William Eggleston (whose book of Arizona front gardens is well worth looking up if you have a mind to).

Byrne explains that he has deliberately avoided subjects like sex and violence and political intrigue because people already have preconceived ideas about such things; Byrne prefers to deal with "stuff that's too dumb for people to have bothered to formulate opinions on". This is disingenuous, not to say a bit cheeky: for one thing, you try inventing an idea for a screenplay that involves no sex, no violence and no political intrigue; for another thing, rather more than half the themes running through *True Stories* devolve into precisely those questions of sex (blind dates, mating rituals), violence (weapons and information technology, conspiracy theory) and political intrigue (consumer capitalism, post-industrial architecture, New Patriotism and of course, *The End of the World*). So? So. The trick, as Byrne later points out, is to tell the story in such a way that you don't notice *What It Is Trying To Say* while you're watching it. *True Stories* – the book – is very funny, very serious, very beautiful and – maybe – jolly useful to have at your elbow. Obtain!

Marc Issue



The BLITZ Designer Collection – 22 denim jackets specially customised for BLITZ by some of the world's top fashion designers – stays at the Victoria & Albert Museum until September 28th. A chance too to see

cover boy George modelling the BLITZ jacket in a video of the BLITZ Fashion Gala that took place during the summer. The collection of jackets moves to New York in October, and will hopefully be appearing in Paris and Milan early next year. Meanwhile, the Victoria & Albert Museum is open every day except Friday. Monday-Saturday 10.00am-5.50pm; Sunday 2.30pm-5.50pm.

Jane Birkin in Dust



An image from the lens of our very own Russell Young. It forms part of an exhibition of pictures by Russell and three other photographers currently running in Harrods' Way-In department. Also featured: Coneyl Jay, Chris Clunn and Jayne Houghton. The exhibition closes at the end of August.

The other night Jane Birkin had a dream about murdering a woman.

"I'd killed her, but before she died she'd had time to scrawl my name in blood on a wall. I remember feeling horrified that everyone was going to read about it in the papers and find out that I wasn't the nice, well-behaved girl they thought I was."

A telling dream, since public misconception appears to slouch along behind Jane's every move these days, all because of a little thing she did years and years ago, a record called *Je T'Aime (Moi Non Plus)*, banned at the time for its erotic overtones. Since then, though, she's done more than her fair share of serious acting in France, her semi-adopted home, and is soon to be seen in a powerful new film called *Dust*, opening throughout the country later this month. But still the myopia persists.

"I have to be so rigorous in my interviews because if I let my concentration slip and throw in some flippant comment, I end up reading in the papers nothing other than that I wear bedsocks in bed. It's so easy for people not to notice anything else except what they want to notice. That was one of the reasons I made *Dust*, to scream out that I'm here."

It's perhaps no surprise that *Dust* is primarily the tale of a woman trying to deal with that invisibility. Jane plays Magda, the daughter of a South African farmer, and spends much of the film trying to break into some form of external acknowledgement of her existence. In the JM Coetzee novel *In The Heart Of The Country* on which the film is based, Magda is meant to be grotesquely ugly, whereas in the film she is played as being simply plain, "with all the hairs on the inside"; a decision which gives the film much of its strength. As a portrayal of frustration and despair in such a barren environment, it's an incredible film, and as Magda, Jane Birkin gives a moving and at times frighteningly powerful performance. It's a role which should do much to erase any false impressions a British audience might have had of her up to now.

The family tree is full of people who act, including her daughter by Serge Gainsbourg, Charlotte (star of *An Impudent Girl* and currently just about the most in-demand actress in France), and also her mother.

"My mother came to see *Dust* at the London Film Festival and walked out at the end in tears. Those were the tears that I respected most because for too long my parents have had to put up with all these stupid stories about their frivolous little girl. I think *Dust* has made them proud of me and that's nice."

Paul Mathur

Ossessione

Ossessione, Italian director Luchino Visconti's debut full-length feature, is only now getting its first screening in this country, with many of the steamy sequences originally censored newly-restored. Made in 1942, *Ossessione* is often (wrongly) cited as Visconti's foray into the 'neo-realist' genre — it's actually closer in style to his mentor, Renoir, as this print shows.

The plot is straightforward and dramatic — a handsome stranger, Gino, seduces an unhappy wife, Giovanna, away from her grossly overweight husband, who they subsequently bump off (literally — over a cliff). Gino is 'shopped' by the homosexual La Spagnol, a fellow itinerant who errs in making claims on Gino's essential 'loner' existence. 'Divine retribution' finishes the film with



Giovanna's accidental death — that's not really giving the end away, though, as it's quite apparent from the start that this is a doomed affair all round.

The appeal of *Ossessione* lies in its manifestations of Visconti's own nascent obsessions — guilt, lust, and betrayal. The fatalistic storyline comes more from the 19th century novels of Hardy or Flaubert, than from James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, which provided the original idea. Part of the mythology surrounding the movie alleges that Visconti sold his mother's jewels to finance the production, and that Mussolini's son denounced it saying "This is not Italy." Another, possibly apocryphal, tale is that the archbishop of Salso sprinkled an auditorium with holy water after a showing. It's certainly true that the film was made whilst Italy was busy losing the war, and censors were eager to portray rather lighter subjects to boost morale — hence the heavy cutting of the film. An obvious must for historians, Visconti buffs and lovers of sticky singlets and sweaty embraces everywhere.

Philip Moore

Ossessione plays at the Royal Two screens in London from August 22nd, and transfers to the Movo afterwards, with regional releases in the Autumn.



**MICHAEL
CLARK
OFFER
— FREE
TICKETS**

In September the Sadlers Wells Theatre in London will present the world premiere of a brand new show by Michael Clark & Company. Judging by Clark's past reputation (he has been called "the first punk superstar of ballet"), the show will be nothing if not controversial. It runs from 17th-27th September and we have ten pairs of tickets to give away free for the performance of the evening of Saturday, September 20th. Apply on a postcard to Michael Clark Offer, Blitz Magazine, 1 Lower James Street, London W1R 3PN. The first ten received will win a pair of tickets.



Dust off those dollars, prime your pen and chequebook, acquire an Access card or even open an account. September will see a rash of spend, spend, spend hospital cases who have been caught in the rush to be first through the doors of what must be the trendiest store to open in days. John Richmond and Maria Cornejo are following the success of their fashion week fling by opening their first RICHMOND/CORNEJO shop, in association with Joseph Ettedgui. It will be the sole London stockist of the pair's punky regalia, and will also stock all the bits and pieces which have become so recognisably Richmond/Cornejo. Womenswear, knitwear, shoes, accessories, tights and even a mention of menswear make the store a place to be seen in. Place your orders.

RICHMOND/CORNEJO is at 130 Draycott Avenue, SW3

The year's most strikingly stylish, startling piece of video can now be found over here on 'Suck', the latest video compilation from independent C&H Productions. Shot by Japanese TV, the six-minute film of Einsturzende Neubaten's Z.N.S. features the remarkable Byakko Shai Dance Company and is a brilliantly exciting, brutally disturbing piece of theatre and dance, mixed with film from Neubaten's Japanese tour. Others featured on the hour-long tape include Laibach live at the Bloomsbury Theatre, Pink Industry's *What Wouldn't I Give*, Paul Haig, The Shop Assistants, Red Lorry Yellow Lorry, Gangway, Hardcorps, Front 242 and the superbly named Crucifixion of Sean Penn. Link items between tracks include the best of the video postcards, a cartoon from Bob Lory and David Bailey's anti-fur trade commercial. All for around £15. Information from C & H Productions, 27 Norfolk Square, Brighton, 0273-24653.

Games People Play



As the concept of games-playing becomes increasingly abstract and intangible, letting you feed half a million blips into a computer and giving you the chance to control the universe, it's interesting to see a last twitch of hope for something you can touch. A spate of new games releases might even be heralding a return to family nights in the lounge with a set of dice and two hundred plastic counters.

Actually, the solid form of the game is getting less of a tactical necessity and more of a designer status symbol. It has to look good on a shelf but once you've pointed at it and broken the ice, its useful purpose is apparently at an end. Take *A Question Of Scruples* for example, the greatest Selling Of A Concept yet. The game revolves around how scrupulously you and your yuppie friends would react in certain situations, or at least how accurately you can predict your playmates' responses. It's a great game but at the best of times only fleetingly in touch with any ideas you might have had about going up snakes and down ladders. The instructions even admit that you can do away with the components after a while, making up your own questions. No cards, no board, no scorepad. Almost metaphysical.

Trivial Pursuit could never really be called metaphysical, but after playing the new Genus 2 Edition at the press launch on a boat down the Thames with Ossie Ardilles and Nicholas Parsons, I can see that it might have a few surrealist possibilities after all. If, like me, you revel in being able to tug threads of absolutely useless information from the core of the old grey matter, you'll love the new edition, especially its far from pompous sense of self-ridicule. If you hate smartasses who know the line-ups of all the first division football teams of the early seventies, you'll tear your hair out in disgust.

Perhaps you'd be better off with an old favourite like *Monopoly*. Newly packaged in the De-Luxe and Jubilee editions (the latter coming in a quite stupendous tin box) it takes the idea of Game As Art-efact about as far as it's prepared to go. Dice, money, Chance cards and even player pieces. It's nice to know that some things are never going to change. Actually, I don't know how I'm going to break this to you, but word's out that *Monopoly* is also available as a computer game. Going to Hamleys may never be the same again.

Paul Mathur



Coca-Cola

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Coke is it!



LOST IN AMERICA

JAMES BRADY on the brave, new (and occasionally slightly dodgy) world of Investment Banking.

"Earlier this year a stockbroking clerk was arrested for spiking Contac cold capsules with rat poison in an attempt to drive the stock down."

Looking at a sampling of non-liberal arts graduates, 25% of this year's Harvard Business School graduates chose Investment Banking as a career. No lack of work ethic here — the likes of Mike Milken (Senior Vice President of Drexel Burnham Lambert) work eighteen hours a day, seven days a week. Which isn't considered all that unusual. Of course they do get paid and then some: from a starting compensation (including estimated bonuses and commissions) of \$80,000pa all the way up to the \$40 million Milken is supposed to have earned last year.

Ten years ago, only 10% of Harvard graduates chose Investment Banking, so what — apart from the money — is the big deal? The last few years have seen mergers and acquisitions (the flashy side of the job) come to the fore, facilitated by a steadily rising market and the creation of a whole new array of financial devices. In 1979 there were 1,526 mergers and acquisitions (worth about \$34 billion) and in 1985 there were 3,337 (worth about \$140 billion). This is a market largely created by and for the investment bankers, powered in particular by Milken's pioneering of the junk bond.

Junk bonds are basically a form of low-grade debt enabling new and small-to-medium companies, without the AAA credit rating you used to need in order to raise credit, to get the money and fast. They're called junk bonds because that's what the old school thought of them — to their cost. When Ted Turner (head of Cable News Network) announced he wanted "to be Dan Rather's boss" (Dan Rather is the anchorman for CBS, so Turner was saying he wanted to take CBS over), everyone laughed. It was like a mouse announcing it was going to eat an elephant. And although it didn't happen, Turner went on to acquire MGM/UA for \$1.5 billion (\$1.2 billion of which came from Drexel's junk bonds, earning them a fee of \$48 million). Drexel also financed Rupert Murdoch's purchase of six Metromedia TV stations (the basis of his attempt to create the fourth network). These high profile deals are the tip of a \$100

billion low-rated debt market, \$46 billion of which is junk bonds (Drexel controlling 70% of it).

This aggressive high finance is the new Investment Banking and has earned its leading practitioner a healthy reputation: "Drexel are scum", "Drexel is the Libya of investment banking", "Drexel are the killer Dobermans of Wall Street." Hungry entrepreneurs love junk bonds and the new takeover wars because it allows them to buy things they would not otherwise be able to afford, especially in conjunction with LBO — leverage buy out — which is when you use the assets of the company you're after as collateral for the money you borrow to finance the deal. Companies that get gobbled up by these hostile takeovers are less inclined to be pleased, since their assets often get cannibalised and sold off in order to pay off the cost of the acquisition. Even resisting a hostile takeover can seriously weaken a company. CBS went to great lengths to prevent Ted Turner from becoming Dan Rather's boss, offering to buy shareholders' stock back at prices way above the current market value. This cost them millions, and at the same time alerted Laurence Tisch (Chairman of Loews), who began buying CBS stock. His was a no-lose situation — either he could sell back his stock to CBS at a huge profit, or he would become Dan Rather's boss (which he did by collecting a 19.7% share).

The whole business is a no-lose situation for investment bankers. Either they can play the offensive by researching for companies that would make good takeover targets for their clients (companies whose current market value on the stock market is below the sum total of their assets), or they can generate a fee by playing for the other side and defending a company against a takeover bid.

It may be sleazy and pretty much money for nothing, but it is technically speaking legitimate. However, not all investment bankers, in their race to get the fast bucks, draw the line at breaking the law. Earlier

this year a stock-broking clerk was arrested for spiking Contac cold capsules with rat poison in an attempt to drive the stock down. So far that's one of a kind, unlike insider trading, which seems to be running rife, especially with the breaking of the Dennis Levine scandal. A Drexel employee who was only earning \$1 million pa, Dennis Levine got into the profitable habit of using inside information about upcoming mergers and acquisitions to buy and sell stock in those companies for personal profit.

In the course of five years he made 54 deals and \$12.6 million — from the first modest \$4,093, which he netted by buying shares in Dart Industries the day before Kraft announced a bid, to the \$2.7 million haul he took by buying into Nabisco (his largest deal). The whole operation was conducted secret-agent style. First he opened a secret bank account in the Bahamas under the codename 'Diamond'. The bank was never allowed to contact him and if he had instructions to relay to them he would call them collect from a payphone during his lunch hour. To make withdrawals he would make day-trips to the island, travel under an assumed name, and take circuitous routes to and from the bank.

But all this did not prevent the SEC (Securities Exchange Commission), which is particularly watchful about insider trading, from catching up with him. Even though Levine did show a certain recklessness towards the end when he knew he was being investigated, the media's almost frantic search for psychoanalytical explanations and attempts to force-fit Levine into a criminal stereotype (publicly he was "kind and trustworthy" while privately he was "a liar and a crook", according to New York Magazine) seem unnecessary. For he is just an extension (if an illegal one) of the new fast-buck, yuppie Wall Street — all flash paper and mega-deals. Besides, as Levine told one of his confederates, "everybody does it". He may well be right — in twelve of last year's top twenty deals there was a flurry of trading

before any public announcement was made. The problem with pinpointing insider trading would seem to be that a stock market of equal opportunity, with everyone knowing the same thing, is as much against the nature of the beast as it is simply impossible.

But how much longer will investment banking be able to enjoy this funny money, criminal or not? Can the rise on the Dow Jones Index that has fuelled this paper bonanza continue forever without crashing in a panic like it did once before? And what about the deficit? 'The Deficit Trials' are a compelling series of ads from the Grace Corporation set in a Bladerunner/1984 future, which happens to be the next generation blighted by a trillion dollar deficit (hence the trials). But this is the old school thinking (balance your books, live within your means and pay your dues), which the impatient new wave seem to have little time for. They seem to think that the only way to make money is to spend it, and if you don't have it then you should borrow it, lots of it. As for the deficit, well, the Jehovah's Witnesses have been predicting the end of the world any day now for quite some time. Maybe like the greenhouse effect, nuclear annihilation or the population explosion it's one of those things perpetually just around the corner.

One of the biggest criticisms of Investment Banking is that it doesn't create any value, this shuffling around of the wealth that other people have created and skimming fees off the top. As Merrill Lynch's LBO wizard, James Burke, admits, "It's very tough to prove that any value is created... but the investment bankers and the lawyers get rich." The counter-argument runs that companies threatened by takeovers are more likely to get their act together or get take over and lose their act altogether. One thing is certain, that bears of very little brain can make great investment bankers. Beyond being able to assimilate vast amounts of data and work under incredible pressure, all you really have to do is buy low and sell high (which is the secret of making money — remember you read it here first).

Ultimately all we're talking about is bits of paper. The funny thing about dollar bills is that they have 'In God We Trust' printed on the back side. If this were simply a non-ulterior statement of faith, then they'd print it on grocery bags and milk cartons. But they don't, not because these items usefully bear the picture of missing children, but because no one has any interest in turning a brown paper bag into a thing of value (yet). 'In God We Trust' must be intended to work a strange magic, as if the mere investment of belief will prevent the money from turning back into the worthless piece of paper it is. When Chamberlain said, "I hold in my hand a piece of paper," he was dead right, and better for us if we had believed him. In pieces of paper we trust, even though we don't seem to be able to recognize one when we see one. ●

AT LAST THE FIRST
ESSENTIAL
ALBUM



'It's a little bleak around here...'

LIFE'S HARD AND THEN YOU DIE

IT'S IMMATERIAL

'Try life insurance...'

Siegfried Sassoon's lover, Rex Whistler's best friend and Cecil Beaton's inspiration, STEPHEN TENNANT is the last remaining symbol of the exoticism which won the social rebels of the Inbetween Time their reputation. This month his one and only novel, *Leaves From A Missionary's Notebook*, is republished. Philip Hoare looks back over a wild and stylish life.

Stephen Tennant was born the wilful son of a wilful mother, Lady Pamela Grey, a beauty and notorious indulger of her children's whims — Tennant was well into applying beauty-spots by the time he reached adolescence. Later, going to stay with friends, he would arrive with a large

make-up bag, scampering upstairs to his room and refusing to appear until "I have my face on." In 1923 he went to the Slade, thereby meeting a kindred spirit and ally in baroque fantasy, the artist Rex Whistler. Tennant developed his painting style, convoluted pen-and-ink illustrations with elaborate borders and strange little phrases drawn in. This was the predominant theme of his first book, *Leaves From A Missionary's Notebook*, a fantasy conceived around a wayward man of the cloth and his misdemeanours in the South Seas. His one great work of a lifetime is entitled *Lascar, A Story Of The Maritime Boulevard* — but as a novel it remains unwritten. Instead, there are countless designs for its cover, all depicting Genet-like sailors, voluptuous rough trade and seamy harlots.

Travel during that time perfectly suited a dilettante's pursuits, and substantial family wealth made it possible for Tennant to research *Lascar* and other ephemeral

projects with little thought for the ordinary ways and means of the world. But his spirit for adventure, physically at least, waned after the war, when he took to his bed, declaring that he would never get up again. Nor did he, and his legs, weakened from lack of exercise, soon failed to support him, and his self-imposed recumbency became necessity.

The Tennant country house, Wilsford Manor, deep in Wiltshire, is now his retreat. Before the war it was host to the likes of Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, Nancy Mitford and Lytton Strachey, who all made the pilgrimage to his extraordinary home. He had transformed the gardens with palms, strange statuary and tropical birds, later changed on a whim to reptiles. "We had lunch on the lawn," recorded Strachey in 1927, "in such blazing sun that our host was given excuse for sending for a yellow parasol for himself and a series of gigantic plaited straw hats for his guests. We were filmed almost the whole time by a footman (a dark young man in spectacles)... Stephen was extremely amiable, though his lips were a little too magenta for my taste."

Others' impressions' accentuate the commotion Tennant's appearance could create. David Herbert met him off the boat when he arrived in New York: "He appeared, 'marcelled' and painted, wearing a large black felt hat trimmed with flowers, a gold tinsel tie and a shiny black mackintosh with a fur collar. This may not sound odd now, but in the 30's it was electrifying..." Herbert threw a cocktail party in his honour. "... A manicurist arrived at the hotel room door — 'I'm afraid you've made a mistake,' I started to say, 'No, no!' cried Stephen. 'It's for me.' He sat down, talking all the time while the girl manicured his nails. Quite suddenly he exclaimed, 'My dear! Your nails are in a terrible state. I suppose you never have time to have them done yourself. And whisking round the trolley, he got to work...' After a while, a seraphic smile appeared on Stephen's face and he said, 'There! That's better. Now you can go anywhere!'"

Stephen Tennant still lies in bed at Wilsford, his hair dyed red, surrounded by his jewels and teddy-bears. Leopardskin rugs and sea-shells litter every available surface, whilst he selects one of his innumerable scents, chosen for their exotic names, to try out on a guest's arm or handkerchief. On his feet are ballet pumps, one pink and one blue, laced up to his shins. He insists he has the "legs of a dancer trained by Massine", and the house-keeper once came in to find Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia (Catherine Oxenberg's mum) yanking off his trousers so as to admire them better.

Despite having reached the dreaded age of 80, he remains essentially youthful, and has always been a true innocent. Depression does touch him a little, and a recent spell in a nursing-home has predictably brought morbid thoughts. But with the reappearance of his first novel, a forthcoming BBC film, and the family history by his great-nephew Simon Blow due next year, Stephen Tennant, as an undoubted extrovert, should be pleased by a rather satisfying renewal of interest in his extraordinary life. ●

Leaves From A Missionary's Notebook is republished this month by Hamish Hamilton. With many thanks to Hugo Vickers and Simon Blow for their invaluable help.



PAPERBACK CHOICE

JONH WILDE browses the book shelves

● In *The Future Perfect* and *How German Is It*, both by Walter Abish (Faber), Abish's world seems to mock itself, electing to leave its own logic out in the sun until it magically

metamorphoses into some new form. In *The Future Perfect*, his *Seventies* collection of short stories, gathers everyday instances and scratches away at them until fear and unease start howling for

attention. In all his startling scenarios, logic-chopping turns into a new and subtle form of bloodsport while his characters disintegrate absently centre-stage. How German Is It forms an Abish mystery of sorts and red herrings start looking more like killer sharks by the end. Like all his work, pauses are used to devastating effect with the fictional concentration-camp town of Brumholdstein as metaphor for his semantic war between past and

present. Aside from all that, this Austrian-born American Jew pours an acidic humour between the cracks that'll have you smirking yourself silly. ● *Mailer*, Peter Manso (Penguin). Why, pray tell, are books about the old hoodlum invariably more voluptuous than books by the old hoodlum. If Mailer's forty years as literary bruiser have only yielded half a dozen truly remarkable works, his biographies are consistently

sizzling. This, the most revealing so far, takes the form of reminiscences by hordes of friends, wives and hangers-on and refrains from the sycophantic slobbering that has slightly marred these attempts in the past. Mailer comes out with typical angel-devil charm and his usual ratio of brilliance and bullshit.

● *Encyclopaedia Of Modern Murder 1962-1983*, Colin Wilson & Donald Seaman (Pan). Splendid thumb-nail sketches of



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NEW FICTION PAPERBACKS

Reviewed by Mark Cordery.

A *Star is Torn* by Robyn Archer and Diane Simmonds (Virago, £7.95) is an exercise in mystification that Marlowe (Chris, not Phil, presumably) would have balked at. It is a catalogue of some of the horrors that befell some famous women who died "too young": no prizes will be distributed for guessing that these include Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Marilyn Monroe, Janis Joplin, Judy Garland, etcetera. The lives on display read pretty much like other lives — other women's, other men's lives. Faster and fuller than most, perhaps, but only human.

Archer claims in her introduction to view the subjects "as women first, and as stars and phenomena second", and so we are led to expect to learn something about women, rather than whatever it was about "stars" that drew us to the title in the first place.

The delivery of the text obscures and mystifies the actuality of a number of the deaths in question. We are told, during the description of Bessie Smith's death in a car crash, that she was dead on arrival at the hospital. It is suggested that she was taken first to a whites-only hospital where she was refused treatment; we are also told that there was a doctor at the scene of the crash, but "other casualties" were treated before Bessie, and so she died. Are we to suppose that Bessie Smith met her untimely end because she was black, or because she was a woman, or because she was a famous blues singer? Which is the most likely, or the least ridiculous, and how does it square with the rest of the book? The only common factors shared by these women are their celebrity, their expiry and like the vast majority of people of all races, both sexes and all shades of sexual persuasion, they had pretty miserable lives under the work machine.

A Star is Torn confuses the treatment of the image of the celebrity with the treatment of the person who 'inhabits' a part of that celebrity — a confusion which is routinely and widely entered into — and no indication is given that the nature of "stardom" has been understood at all.

It is troubling to find this catalogue of

horror stories proclaiming that women of talent and achievement are routinely and naturally "punished" for their "talent" and "success". It suggests a fantastical pornography of oppression which is distasteful and finally dishonest — famous dead men are excluded here because apparently they "were not thrown into terminal confusion by a central dichotomy in their lives. Instead of dying of frustration because of their powerlessness to control circumstances and events, it was the unlimited power that Stardom afforded them which led to all-consuming and fatal gluttony."

We should have no patience with this sort of bigotry, whichever gender it comes from.

By comparison, *Rock Wives* by Victoria Balfour (Virgin, £4.99) acquires its modest project rather well. Ignore the tacky cover and the reveal-all promises, and you find inside the thesis that it is the women behind the flash that keep the show on the road. It is an essay in strong women and frail, ego-bound men, and it doesn't deserve the indignity of being dressed up the way it is.

The Way We Live Now by Bernard Levin (Sceptre, £3.50). The first thing that hits the unwary browser is the impertinent little collection of tributes from Bernie's Buddies on the back cover: "Best living essayist," hoots Woodrow Wyatt (Times); "best polemical journalist alive," smarms Auberon Waugh (Mail); "a splendid collection, robust, funny and intelligent," babbles Allan Massie (Spectator). Well there's three gentlemen into whose collaborative critical mitts I would not entrust a bus timetable, and so much for the tributes. Inside, we are gobsmacked with a gale of pretension — not a word I use a lot (let him who is without sin, and all that rot!) but Bernard's scorched-earth deployment of classical phrases can only indicate that his discursive skills are derived mostly from dead people — which is no bad thing in itself, let me hasten to add, but wasn't there something about "living" essayist...? What really bugs me about Big Bernie's Bumper Book, however, is the common sense — it's completely infested with the stuff. Cultural hegemony oozes from every pore and he makes the very concept of Establishment Figure seem a bit, you know, flared trousers. When your stock-in-trade is *bons mots* in dead languages, and your chosen subject is the entirely spurious concept of Common Sense, then in my book, at least, there's

nothing down for you in the greatest living essayist stakes. Sorry, Bern.

Understains — The Sense and Seduction of Advertising by Kathy Myers, (Comedia, £5.95). "And if you give the book a bad review," Kathy said to me as we got off the 73 bus, "I'll set the dog on you." Well, understood. *Understains* is a concise analysis of the forms and functions of contemporary advertising, with consideration given to the magic or voodoo implications of what it is for in the context of consumer capitalism. I would have liked more of it, but I have no other complaints.

Piece of My Heart: The Life, Times and Legend of Janis Joplin by David Dalton is the Janis Joplin book that goes with the Stanley Booth Rolling Stones book — Dalton writes rock narrative as well as anyone has ever written it, and has an illuminating story to tell. Recommended. ●

NEW NON-FICTION

Reviewed by Marc Issue.

David Harsent is a poet, which you can tell from his first novel, *From An Inland Sea* (King Penguin, £3.95). There's not a word wasted in this prose. It doesn't read as especially clipped or terse, however; it's easily fluid. Each word, sentence, paragraph, follows with a beguiling inexorability, at once perfectly natural, it seems, and yet frequently surprising.

"I found, in one of your diaries..." nothing much, as it happens. But it's the principle, of a vivid love affair that turns obsessively on upon itself, devouring itself, until we are left with a heartfelt of black bile, a pile of photographs and the onset of a stinging pain that signals the onset of the Clap.

From An Inland Sea traces the lovers' arc in a series of brief episodes: a holiday in the south of France, with its passions, play-acting and pauses, easy comedy and the first sight of strain — some loose stitching that leads to irreparable tearing; a dinner party featuring a tremendous drunk; a scrap in a kitchen at a party; a scene of domestic violence glimpsed through a window; driving; separations. Its effects come from both the resonance of the language and the fantastic, at times heart-stopping acuity of the observations.

Descriptions of physical actions bring them to life in a far more palpably real way than showing them could (a picture would not be worth one hundred of these meticulously chosen words) and the sensitivity to gradations and possibilities of emotion in any scene is so vigilant it's almost painful. An unforgettably brilliant, luminous novel that left me feeling twice as alive when I'd finished it.

The Aerodynamics Of Pork (Abacus, £3.95) by Patrick Gale is a well-rounded comedy that manages to connect a minor middle-class music festival with an Islington lesbian disco, via the long arm of the law and the psychosomatic power of astrology. The Peake family, starring sickly-sweet 15-year old violin prodigy Seth, and his neurotic fag hag sister Venetia, are in their Cornwall cottage preparing for said festival with their good Guardian-reading mother. Mr Peake is in Vienna, preparing a paper pitched somewhere between history and theology. Or is he? Meanwhile, back in London, a serial burglar is raiding the premises of the capital's leading psychics. Detective Inspector Mo Faithe — the pork of the title — is on the case, while finding time to encounter a very NI-style feminist encounter group, and a punky singer in the aforementioned disco.

The tone is predominantly, and suitably, jocular, although it tends to shift a bit to a faintly sneering superiority, particularly when dealing with our paunchy, spiky-haired types down the disco. Fair enough — but a well-peppered target these days, surely?

Not a trace of condescension or patronage to be found in **Other Fires — Stories From The Women Of Latin America** (Picador, £3.50), widely various as they are. As the editor, Alberto Manguel, notes in his introduction, there is no more justification for lumping together the writers of 'Latin America' — whatever and wherever that might be — than there would be for anthologising the writers of 'Europe'. Except that, while some Latin American writers have achieved Classic status, many, especially the female ones, remain largely unknown outside their native languages. Indeed many of the pieces are here translated into English for the first time.

They range from a Chekhovian dissection of domesticity by Brazilian writer Dinah Silveira De Queiroz, in *Guidance*, to the surreal, Borgesian narrative on S&M (posing as a book review) by Argentinian writer Alejandra Pizarnik. The influence of French Existentialism on the Brazilian Clarice Lispector is evident in her story *The Imitation Of The Rose*, while Socialist Realism is the mode favoured by Elena Poniatowska in her story of Mexican lowlife, *The Night Visitor*. A richly varied selection of all kinds of writing.

As is, I suppose, **Top Fantasy** (Dent, £3.95), edited by Josh Pachter: 24 'fantastic' tales selected and introduced by the authors themselves, who include JG Ballard, Ray Bradbury, Ursula Le Guin and, ah, many, many more. If you wish to know what happens when the Boy With Two Heads meets his girl, or when the Magician Lord Subyrus purchases a blue vase of ghosts for seven thousand golden vaimii, or of the Sun King's struggle with Arawn, the spectral Black Rider... if this sounds like your bag, then this is the one to dip into. I prefer The Twilight Zone on TV, myself. ●

PAPERBACK CHOICE CONTINUED

some of the most recent blood-splatters to cross our paths, with an alarming number of them taking on the shape of metaphorical heroes as much as brutal beasts. Wilson looks to human evolution for some answers and his existentialism tends to snag awkwardly on the issue of avengement, but these terse inscriptions make for compulsive reading. Check under the bed for the man with the bloody hatchet before dozing off, though.

● **City Of Night**, John Rechy (Grainada). Unlike Kerouac, who could run home to mummy when the going got tough, Rechy's torrid search for the heart of America holds no truck with safety nets. From small-town Texas sanctuary to slummy Times Square/Hollywood Boulevard

homo underworld, his hustle is for identity as much as anything. "After all," he considers, "the world's no fucking good. You've got to pretend you don't give a damn and swing along with those that really don't — or you go under." The purest beat novel, it veers from pinnoaked squalour to tender beauty in the blink of an eye.

● **Violent Silence**, Celebrating Georges Bataille (The Georges Bataille Event). In tribute to the writer who, Joyce aside, perhaps did more damage to our casual acceptance of language than any other this century. Throbbing Gristle's Cosy Fanni Tutti, painter John Maybury and writer Paul Buck are amongst those celebrating his genius with some tasteless Bataille-esque forays in

the forbidden corners. Maybe best of all is Buck's Isabelle, which starts out, "How often I've wanted you to shit into my mouth," and descends from there. Orgasm incarnate.

● **A Henry Miller Reader**, edited by John Calder (Picador). Most of these 'readers' are notoriously tacky ideas — chopping up segments of the artist's work to be devoured by those too bloody idle to wade through entire tomes. Miller's is a rare exception, giving a solid context to his Paris/New York escapades as well as hauling some lesser known essays out for public view. Get hooked on this, then take a hike through his entire pageant of sex and God and time. Vital.

● **Sixty Stories**, Donald Barthelme (Obelisk). Selected from fifteen years of his stabs into

the belly of the absurd. Barthelme boasts all the fresh energies of Abish, all the lucidity and drama of Hemingway, all the texture of Beckett. These sixty nudges and winks will make you choke on your rationalism and thoroughly screw up your preconceptions of the short story's role. Scribbling his meanings on a lonely piece of gravel in a quarry somewhere west of the Mississippi River, he'll pull you in by the tonsils, show you the booby-hatch and ruffle your sweet reason. Holy hilarious.

● **The Custom House Of Desire — A Half Century Of Surrealist Stories** (University Of California Press). You might have to stick a scalding poker up your local book-seller's bum to get him to order it for you, but you'll earn a pair of bloodshot eyes for your bother. Aiming at the exploration of the impossible,

there's no extra charge for turning your thoughts to jelly-fish and ensuring you never take anything too literally again. Swarming with harebrained vision and extravagant erotica, forty-seven brilliantly fractured tales from the giddy edges of the imagination.

● **The Glass Teat**, Harlan Ellison (Ace). Drawn from the great man's LA Free Press television columns from the late Sixties, Ellison's criticisms were born "out of a need to examine what comes to us across the channel waves and to extrapolate from its smallness to the bigness of the trends or concepts to which it speaks." With humour that I'd have to call 'huge' or 'hectic', he sorts out the humdrums from the hellish and seriously makes Clive James read like lawbrock clucking. Really the first and truest of the gonzo reporters.

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Under The Cherry Moon/New Releases/On Release





Bruce Dessau reviews *UNDER THE CHERRY MOON*, Prince's cinematic follow-up to *Purple Rain*.

The Princely proceedings commence with a scene of such steamily symbolic eroticism you almost expect the censor's stamp to come crashing through the screen. Prince, as piano-playing gigolo Christopher Tracey, entertains a patron in his bar, played by Francesca Annis. As she hazily smokes, and he responds with smoky glances from under a gilded turban construction, the playing, acting on instructions passed on tissues, gets faster and more frenzied, culminating in Annis (it transpires a kind of sugar mummy to Tracey) departing in a decidedly post-coital state.

Indeed, he's a right little terror, our Christopher, living on the Cote d'Azur and out to make a few million bucks, aided by second-hand sidekick Tricky (Jerome Benton — Morris Day's sidekick in *Purple Rain*). Gold-digging as a *modus vivendi*, things alter when he encounters and falls head over high heels for Mary, the daughter of rich, ruthless and unapproving businessman Steven Berkoff. A

part originally intended for Terence Stamp, Berkoff is able to sleep, grunt and sneer in his best Bond-villainy style here, thanks to the manoeuvrability of a Cyclopean spot between and above his eyes, which does all the hard thespian processes for him. Remember that craze in the mid-seventies for mood rings — gems which revealed your many and various moods in their many and various hues? Berkoff's bump performs the same function. There is one particular scene where he, his bump and assorted henchmen enter a restaurant where Prince has given an impromptu performance and is now duetting with his daughter, when the blob takes on the glow of red kryptonite to represent daddy's ire. And remember the film is in black and white.

Meanwhile, back at Christopher Tracey, he is having problems with Tricky, who fails to comprehend that his friend has got the genuine hots for million-heiress Mary, and dissolves their partnership, so that while Tracey dreams of flying with Mary to the Moon and back in a Lear jet, all he gets from Tricky is a jet black leer.

Naturellement, this is a musical comedy and all works out well. Well, sorta. In the meantime, Prince runs through the cavalcade of heroic small actors, dancing gauchely but sexily on the Steinway à la Chaplin, the black and white comedic touches echoing Woody Allen's monochrome *Manhattan*, and of

course the inverted "You'll-never-take-me-alive" finale is Cagney at his bestest. And it's all performed with the maximum of camp, a twenty-five carat, tongue-in-chic job. Like when Tricky is being duffed up by Berkoff's bruiser, it is not his obduracy that earns him a pasting but his scuffling of one of the villain's loafers. And of course there is the mock *grand guignol* of the close, where Tracey is fatally wounded by being shot in the Armani.

Of course, no mention is ever made of racism. This is an arena where money is your calling card. Fantasy maybe, but when Prince gatecrashes the society birthday party where he first meets Mary, his ejection is precipitated by his impecuniosity rather than by his butterscotch hue, which in the best Bill Cosby tradition becomes insignificant when the script and delivery is as sharp as this.

Unlike *Purple Rain*, where Prince played, we are led to believe, himself, here he acts, often with considerable charm and humour. Cocky and self-assured, there is none of the misogynistic undertow of *Purple Rain* (that jerking away of his Honda each time his girlfriend tried to mount it) apart from the moment when he arrives at his sugar mummy's boudoir to find his place taken by Berkoff and departs with a yelp of "Don't forget to put the pillow under her ass, she likes that!"

High heels apart, *Cherry Moon* is a grandiloquent and highly successful (contrary to the opinions of the US press) one-man conceit more concerned with cross-marketing than cross-dressing. The jump from vinyl to celluloid is undertaken by Mr Rogers Nelson with nary a jump of the stylus. Unlike that other great cultural signifier of our day, Madonna, he has no Monroe on whom to model himself. In *Purple Rain* Prince may have played himself, but in *Cherry Moon* he plays that hardest of dramatic roles... ahem... someone else. ● <



ALIENS

● Someone suggested to me that if the sequel to *Alien* is called *Aliens*, then the next one will probably be called *Lots Of Aliens* or *Even More Aliens*. Be that as it may, *Aliens* is slick and pacy and a creditable attempt at following up the slick and pacy original, with Sigourney Weaver once more taking on the role of Warrant Officer Ripley, the sole survivor of the first film. Somehow she is persuaded to return to the planet where she and her companions picked up the first 'alien' and she

is accompanied by a squad of space marines who (we know better) seem to take their mission rather lightly. When they arrive, they find themselves besieged, as the title suggests, by a whole army of squeaky, slimy 'aliens' and this is where director James Cameron comes into his own. As the director of *The Terminator* and co-writer of *Rambo*, there's not much Cameron doesn't know about the hundred and one different ways to zap an undesirable, and zapping there is aplenty. This tends to detract from the kind of tension which

was used to such good effect in *Alien*, but there are enough unpleasant surprises to ensure that by the end of it all you will be considerably more familiar with the underneath of your seat than you were at the start. The film's climax, however, in which we are asked to believe that space isn't a vacuum after all, stretches the bounds of credibility, even for a romp like this, just a little too far.

Tim Hulse

JAKE SPEED

● There's a bit in the middle of this film where the heroine says to the eponymous hero, 'If you're so good, how come they never made a movie about you.' Brecht is behind the painted scenery waving a lot and wearing a big red nose. Actually it looks as if this will be the first of numerous adventures featuring the heroic Mr Speed. And no doubt, each film will circle around the tried and trusted *Romancing The Stone* / *Raiders* formula of the good-looking hero who doesn't shave, accompanied by sorta sexy-looking chick who keeps on flashing her knickers as she scales a high cliff, plus funny sidekick, evil baddie, action, romance and the usual happy ending. This has all those and as such is very nearly perfect in a strange sort of way. John Hurt is delicious as the villain and Wayne Crawford boggly enough to be the offbeat hero Speed. Lots of chortles and even a car chase. What more could you want? *Paul Mathur*



PRETTY IN PINK

● News that this is A JOHN HUGHES PRODUCTION should alert viewers to the fact that we are likely to be dealing with a drama as profound, witty and moving as the likes of *The Breakfast Club* and *Weird Science*. The basic premise of A JOHN HUGHES PRODUCTION

is that THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT and LOSERS CAN BE WINNERS TOO. Yep, that profound. In *Pretty In Pink* Molly Ringwald plays Andie, the ugly duckling who suffers not only from her looks but also from her poor background. In the terminology of her highschool this means she is a 'Zoid' as opposed to a 'Richie'. Shall we go on? We must. Andie has

a wacky friend called 'Duckie', who is meant to be lovable but struck me as quite frankly obnoxious. 'Duckie' is secretly in love with Andie, but Andie is in love with a 'Richie', who struck me as equally obnoxious. The ending apparently "reaffirms the courageous spirit of today's youth," and the same could be said of my own decision to stick the thing out to the end.

Tim Hulse

TARGET

● Brat vehicle, basically. Matt Dillon is a young tuff with oil on his hands and a big lump of embarrassment for his dim and dumb and dull as dishwater dad. Who is fond of biting his lip and saying nothing. Mom goes for a holiday to Paris France Yoop and — strike a light! — goes and gets herself kidnapped. Well now, young Matt is all set to go haring off to Yoop to rescue his Mom, agreeing to take Pop along too. And then suddenly, somebody tries to kill Pop! Matt is obliged to give vent to his best expression of Confusion and Consternation. Dad's only a former CIA agent who was given a new identity and a new life when Matt was just a nipper, isn't he! From that point in, it's all pretty much as you might imagine — chases, gunfire, explosions, you know the kind of thing — enlivened at one point by a hysterically sadistic invalid sequence. OK. I've seen Gene Hackman in better films. So have you. I have seen Matt Dillon in better films too (actually!). But *Target* has sufficient redeeming silliness to make it worth renting out for the evening when it gets onto video. . . .

Marc Issue

AT CLOSE RANGE

● One of the best films of the year, without a doubt. Sean Penn plays Brad Whitewood Jr., a grunting, inarticulate hulk of a young man (the kind of character that method acting must have been invented for) who longs for a little adventure in the farmlands of Pennsylvania. He finds a halting kind of love in the shape of the deliciously plain Terry (Mary Stuart Masterson) and he finds excitement with the reappearance of his father, Brad Sr. (Christopher Walken), a professional criminal and leader of a gang specialising in armed heists. Brad Jr. sets up his own gang with less success and while he is held in jail his father begins to appear in his true colours. He rapes Terry and begins the systematic extermination of his son's gang. Before long only Brad Jr. is left and the scene is set for a gripping (and at one point shockingly violent) finale. James Foley directs with a realism reminiscent of *The Executioner's Song* while the opening chords of Madonna's *Live To Tell* provide a suspenseful

coda throughout. Walken is splendidly indecipherable, while Penn is quite superb, only losing it right at the end when he goes slightly over the top with the facial emotion in the courtroom scene. Go see it.

Tim Hulse

ROSA LUXEMBURG

● As with all Margarethe von Trotta's films, her latest falls into the difficult category of 'Worthy Cinema'. Difficult because no matter how well-intentioned a work of art is, there is still no excuse for boring the audience. This regrettably, is what *Rosa Luxemburg* does for extended periods, so that its normally undaunting 124 minutes, in this case seem interminable. A journalist, pacifist and author, the eponymous heroine is remembered not just as a leader of the German Social Democratic Party but for her selfless humanity and inspired oratory. In 1919, at the height of the revolution in Berlin which precipitated the abdication of Wilhelm II, she was brutally murdered by her political adversaries. Barbara Sukowa, who, like von Trotta herself, worked extensively with the late Rainer Werner Fassbinder, received the Best Actress Award at Cannes for her performance and it is indeed a portrayal of both power and subtlety. However, history tells us that Luxemburg was a gay, passionate woman who believed firmly that people responded best to the joyful expounding of an ideology. Sukowa fashions an altogether too solemn characterisation, bringing out the combative, passionate side to Rosa, but not the sheer exuberance of her beliefs. Compounding this problem is the fact that von Trotta, who also scripted the film, provides us with an unappetising excess of political theorizing and too little insight into the private nature of this remarkable, courageous individual.

Mark Brennan

BETTY BLUE

● *Betty Blue* is the third film from director Jean-Jacques Beineix, the successor to the wondrous *Divas* and disastrous *Moon In The Gutter*. Betty Blue is a crazy 20 year-old girl with no particular place to go but with a passion for passion. She wanders into the life of 35 year-old Zorg (Zorg?!), a drifter who would be content to eat chilli and paint beach huts for the rest of his days if it weren't for the awakening of an equally deep and

desperate passion inside him. Betty and Zorg are immediately inseparable, devouring and exhausting each other with their love and flaunting it in front of others. Living in the beach hut, Betty discovers notebooks full of Zorg's writing. Certain she has discovered the next Hemingway, she determines to get him published and spends days laboriously typing out his notebooks, only to have them rejected by every publisher she approaches. While she is deeply upset, Zorg is unmoved. Then Betty stabs a customer in a friend's restaurant. The passion

ends. The central relationship around which the film pivots is so strong that it takes a while to sense danger. The crazier Betty gets, the more loving and protective Zorg becomes, but as her awareness slips away there's a moment when you wonder how long his patience and understanding will last. But this is French drama and Beineix involves us so totally in the characters and their situations that the audience will find itself taking sides and wishing decisions on the characters. Perhaps that's why the ending is such a shock and the final twist a poke in the eye. . . .

Judy Lipsey

ON RELEASE

A brief guide to some of the films currently doing the rounds.

RECOMMENDED

● **Hannah And Her Sisters.** Woody Allen turns in his most commercial film for years. Essentially a family saga with Mia Farrow in the title role, Hannah takes in everything from art to artificial insemination, while Allen himself plays a hypochondriac TV producer. Superb.

● **Yellow Earth.** Our Chinese Cinema correspondent was ecstatic about this one, partly for the film's quiet understatement and superb technique, and partly for the post-modernist haircuts.

● **To Live And Die In L.A.** It's a "diamond-hard, bone-splintering thriller," according to this magazine, and who would argue? Exciting cinema.

● **Lady Jane.** It's that Benham Carter girl again, this time appearing with Cory Elwes as the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey (Queen for a few days) and her lover Guilford Dudley. Trevor Nunn's screen debut as director is an absorbing piece of work and marvellously detailed.

THE REST

● **Sid And Nancy.** Never mind the Sex Pistols, here's...um, a

love story, apparently. Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen strafe each other's feet in a film which labours uncomfortably somewhere between fact and fiction. The final scenes in the Chelsea Hotel display a tension sadly lacking in the previous one and a half hours, but by then you'll probably be past caring.

● **Fool For Love.** Robert Altman does as much as anyone could with Sam Shepard's over-rated stage play. Shepard himself stars with Kim Basinger. It goes on a bit.

● **The Color Purple.** Alice Walker's novel is watered down and given the Roots treatment courtesy of Steven Spielberg. We're told that somebody once called it a 'serious' film, but we call it a grade one tear-jerker. If you're out of tissues, just watch the direction, which at times is truly masterful.

● **Desert Hearts.** Not quite the steamy lesbian love drama it's been cracked up to be, more a moving, if occasionally cngemaking, story of human relations. Directed by one of that rare Hollywood breed - women.

● **Enemy Mine.** It sounds like it ought to be one of those gritty U-

boot dramas. In fact, it's a fairly inconsequential science fiction yarn.

● **The Karate Kid: Part II.** Not a patch on the original, which was a minor classic. Here our heroes go off to Japan to take out a thin yarn about love and revenge. The tea ceremony is long enough to test the patience of even a Zen Buddhist.

● **The Doctor And The Devils.** Adapted from an original script written by Dylan Thomas in the Forties, the Burke and Hare story is dug up again (hal!) but there are few traces of life. Directed by famed cinematographer Freddie Francis.

● **Murphy's Romance.** James Garner proves there's more to him than a private dick in a warm and affectionate tale of a midlife crisis. Engaging.

● **After Hours.** The new Scorsese, and a film of two halves. Brian. In the first hour we are treated to plenty of Rosanna Arquette and a genuinely witty and intriguing script. The second hour becomes as frustrating for the viewer as it is for Scorsese's hero, who just wants to go home. By the end of it all you may find yourself in agreement.

● **An Impudent Girl.** Charlotte Gainsbourg, daughter of The Great French Slob, turns in an excellent performance as a 13 year-old poised on the troubling

brink of womanhood. Warm and poignant, directed by Claude Miller.

● **Youngblood.** Hunley Rob Lowe plays hunky Dean Youngblood, a hick from the sticks who wants to be a star ice hockey player. Entertaining in its way, but where's the meat?

● **The Money Pit.** Another Cheers regular, Shelley Long, stars with Tom Hanks in an amusing comedy about moving house.

● **9½ Weeks.** If you're expecting eroticism you will be disappointed. Mickey Rourke is the man with the mucky macho manners, with Kim Basinger as his dreary and submissive lover. It all adds up to some kind of yuppie fantasy and for some reason a lot of women seem to love it.

● **Down And Out In Beverly Hills.** Nick Nolte is the tramp who is befriended by a wealthy Beverly Hills couple, played by Bette Midler and Richard Dreyfuss, and who then proceeds to bring them some kind of spiritual happiness, man. Laffs are fairly thin on the ground and the moral cop-out at the end should make you puke. On the other hand, Little Richard is just fine and the dog is too cute for words.

● **He Died With His Eyes Open.** Michel Serrault of La Cage Aux Folles fame is the idiosyncratic Inspector Staniland in a French thriller based on a novel

by Robin Cook. Charlotte Rampling is at her steamy best, but the whole fails to live up to the sum of its parts.

● **La Cage Aux Folles 3.** Michel Serrault again, this time on more familiar territory in the third episode of what has until now been an engaging and very amusing series. However, times change and the formula is beginning to wear a bit thin. Stick with numbers 1 and 2.

● **Cobra.** Even if you're prepared to overlook the film's extreme reactionary approach to law and order - unforgiving to say the least - it's hard to find a single redeeming feature in Cobra, a monstrous and ludicrously clichéd celebration of its star's ego and his comic book political outlook that alternates between po-faced philosophising and huge unintentional comedy. When a man of Stallone's genuine ability can choose to make just about any film he pleases, it's sad indeed that he can only come up with this. Without a doubt front-runner so far for worst film of the year. Really.

● **A Woman Or Two.** Depardieu again (see what we mean?), this time teamed up with Sigourney Weaver in a weak comedy about the discovery of a two million year-old female skeleton.

● **Silver Bullet.** A werewolf yarn adapted from Stephen King and enough to terrify the average five year-old.

HIGHLANDER

● If the idea of an eternal champion - the immortal hero who survives through the ages in different guises - appeals to your romantic soul, then *Highlander*, an adventure in several dimensions, should appeal to your busy imagination. Christopher Lambert is an Immortal, Connor MacLeod, who's been hanging around for 450 years waiting for 'The Gathering'. Like Connor there exist in this imperfect world several other Immortals, but since There Can Be Only One, a monster sword fight is in order to determine just who it should be. And that is The Gathering. In between regular flashbacks between Connor's life as a Scot (with a valiant accent) living in the wilds of Glen somewhere in the Middle Ages and his present incarnation as a New York antiques dealer we learn that his main adversary is the Kurgan, an evil giant who has already destroyed Connor's teacher, the Spanish-Egyptian (!) Ramirez (played with immense dash and a huge earring by Sean Connery), and has defiled Connor's only love, Heather. It is the Kurgan who Connor most fears when The Gathering takes place, four and a half centuries later in a sleazy New York back street. It's amazing what you can do with 16 million dollars. You can film a large cast in the beautiful wilds of Scotland, and build a remote tower in a particularly craggy bit; you can film on location in New York and London and segue the time sequences so smoothly you can't possibly see the joins, and you can put together a superb-looking movie full of sweeping angled shots, tasteful lighting, and pacy action. The story, of course, is rubbish. But you can't have everything.

Judy Lipsey

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PAUL MORLEY watches the collision between pop music and soap opera and may never be the same again.

Dog Market!! The name of the pop group from *EastEnders*. It's not often in your life you have to use up those precious rationed exclamation marks. Perhaps half way through *The Adventures of Bullwinkle*? when Rocky Bullwinkle starts at Art School, or in *Moonlighting* when Addison has his hand on Maddie's backside, but... Dog Market!!! It's enough to make you ask the question, What makes animals smart? Or, *Sharon And Elsie* — why? Or even, *Lame Ducks* — what the fuck? Actually, here's a good way to use up some exclamation marks: Dack Rambo!! What about: *Come Dancing!!* *Come Dancing*: not so much David Jacobs, more those pseudo-Cher cut-up cut-away cutting cut in non-cute costumes that all the blonde dancers wear as they dance the Rock and Roll, or is it the Bullwinkle. It obviously makes you ask the question — what is Jack Smethurst *doing* in that Marti Caine allowance they call *Hilary*? I thought he had died while they were recording the last episode of *Love Thy Neighbour*. Here's an exclamation mark for you: I'll have half!

Meanwhile, back at *The Little House On The Prairie*, everyone's gone blind and they're wandering around with tears pouring down their faces. Love is in the air, every minute, every day, moaning seriously: Dog Market!! The Little House On The Prairie, well, the very mention of that has

sobered me up. It's not often in your life that you are reduced, or even increased, to tears, but just one look at the youngest daughter's pig tails, and that was it, I'd have to cry. I watched that girl grow up: sometimes it's as if I know her better than my sister, or Gail Tilsley. The way Wogan and Daniels treated the admittedly rocky Professor Heinz Wolff stung up a few tears. Did you see the way they knocked at his accent? It's not fair, I know his mum well, she was in the ad for computers. The way they hurt Heinz, it was cruel, with no exclamation marks in sight. *My Music* makes me cry. I think it's because everybody on the programme, Norden, Wallace, Amis and Muir, have followed too closely the Mao Tse-Tung quotation that "it's not hard for one to do a bit of good. What is hard is to do good all one's life and never do anything bad..." Jimmy Savile always used to make me cry, come to think of it. And I thought I cried the day Jack Smethurst died — I even remember having a half, I'm sure. "Nice guys finish last," I said, for the honour of Jack. What a waste.

"What a waste" — that's just what the good and simple Peter Stringfellow was saying on TV-am, as the happy and healthy Anneka Rice in-depted him about nightclubbing (as if he was Iggy Pop), style (as if he was Karl Lagerfeld), drugs (as if he was Cassie Carpenter), and art (as if he was Bullwinkle). George Dear Boy was the waste the good and simple Peter

Stringfellow was talking about, bringing the tears to the happy and healthy Anneka Rice's eyes. "You know George very well, don't you," drooled Anneka in shock, as excited as Murray Walker on the last lap. "Well, not deeply, he's not a deep friend. I might say hello to him, I might be in the same room as him, I might pass him in a corridor..." He didn't know him at all, really. This didn't stop h & h Anneka tearfully asking why George had to do it. "It's the pressure of the lifestyle," said the g & s Stringfellow, and Anneka all but fainted at this revelation, and it will go into the "Thoughts Of Peter Stringfellow" to be published this Xmas. On the news a dead body was taken out of George's Hampstead home, and back on the couch the g & s Stringfellow was joined by an O'Dowd brother and an expert who might have been in *The Goodies* but who was certainly a winner on *The Great Egg Race*.

It was soon clear what these people were telling us. Stick to halves. Drugs kill you, or make you cry, and it isn't worth the exclamation marks. "Do you know anyone who takes drugs, Peter," asked misty-eyed Anneka, dreadfully appalled at the seriousness of it all, which was that lovely Nick wasn't her co-presenter, just that walrus who used to do the sport. "No, I've never taken drugs... I don't come across them at all... well, obviously there must be some people who I know... but it's not something that comes up in conversation..."



RETURN TO EDEN

Can I just say hello to my mum and dad... we're all normal here you know..."

Anneka, Peter, the brother, the expert and the walrus pitied and tutted the year's great problem ever so nicely, and the innocence and goodness of the sort of life such as TV-am must maintain was barely rocked. Grins of relief all round as the brother and the expert dissolve and Rula Lenska with the little bit of pole in her is couched, and the talk is of adultery and champagne and naughty nights out at Peter's very clean club, and life was good again. Another break for news, and a dead body is taken out of George's Hampstead home. It's enough to make you throw up exclamation marks. Or cry out at the world — Dog Market!!

Or even — Ingrid Pitt!! Ingrid The Impaler was an unlikely pop-up in Charlie Wheeler's two-part piece on *Newsnight* for the Berlin Wall's 25th year. Ingrid, perhaps the female Bert Kwouk — are you with me? — used up her one TV appearance a year, certainly her only one ever on BBC 2, to recall how she escaped into the West, plonk in the middle of performing in a Brecht play. Would Bert have been chuffed? She didn't go over the wall, she paddled through the river, and as she struggled to the Western shore an American patrolman plucked her from the waters. "And you were very grateful to this patrolman, weren't you," asks Wheeler, whose hair has often made me cry. "Oh yes," pouts a suddenly

poor and bruised Ingrid, and the eyes drop shyly to the floor, and there is a pause. "So grateful that I married him." I bet she did. The good old Berlin Wall, let's have an anniversary, stories galore, tears to the eyes, better than the Royal Wedding for the good and serious liberals, and what about those dummies dressed as Russian patrol guards, well, all men must die, but death can vary in its significance. Exclamation mark.

Meanwhile, in *Return To Eden* everyone is everyone's brother and sister and everyone has had their sexual organs burnt off and everyone is married to each other and everyone was brought up in a convent and everyone keeps getting younger and everyone keeps getting older and everyone has no money and everyone is incredibly rich and everyone has a pigskin wallet with 'Dog Market!!' stamped in small gold letters on the inside. I began watching *Return To Eden* thinking that it was one of those officially effortless three-parters, and am slightly disturbed to find that it will in fact last for ever, or at least until we discover that everyone is a gorilla and the victim of some ghastly nazi experiment, and that it is not set in Australia but a zoo in Montreal. I can't leave it alone, alas, even though I can't remember who anybody is — except Jake Stringfellow who's meant to be a cross between Goebbels, Mailer and Kerry Packer and looks like Patsy Kensit's younger brother. And of course there's Angelo D'Angelo as Angelo, and that piece of casting is the thing that's made me laugh the most these past few weeks, apart from Steve Jones' duckwalk during *Anarchy In The UK* on *The Way They Were* (I'm not talking about pop music there, I'm talking Death Of A Memory), Botham talking about the vomit of Ray Illingworth, and Dog Market!! There's not much to laugh about these days, so there's nothing like a good cry.

After a cracking good cry, there is obviously nothing left in life other than Champagne Dreams and Caviar Wishes. My brand new friend Robin Leach told me so, during his hollowed-out and perishable *Life Styles Of The Rich And Famous* inside which Leach reveals to all mortal simpletons — kids like me, like you, as Jimmy Pursey said, before he joined the great Jack Smethurst in the sky — the gothic sensation, the valuable perfection, the physical bliss of being an immortal states star, an American celeb, a multiple personality. Says Leach, in a voice that takes Whicker, Murray Walker, Peter O'Sullivan, Joe Cocker, John Cooper Clarke, up the arse of Zsa Zsa Gabor: If you appear as a Ewing! If you play golf with Jack Lemmon!! If you ski with Hal Linden!!! If you buy emeralds at the same shop as Elton John!!!! If you delivered the baby child Cybill Shepherd!!!!!! If you put the pole in Rula Lenska!!!!!! If you've smelt the swimming suit of Esther Williams!!!!!! Then you will never die. Did you know that Vic Damone has a suit for every day of the week? That Albert Finney can play the spoons? That Jack Lemmon is a nice guy? That no one takes drugs in Hollywood? That Jane Seymour is an average skier? I can only cry — thank you, Robin! I too could live forever!

I wonder if Dog Market will ever become superstars, make it to a party where Robin Leach has taken his cameras, and so become immortal. Dog Market. Dog Market. Shit. I've run out of exclamation marks. ●

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The Godfathers/Meatloaf/The Triffids/The Bodines/Balaam and the Angel

MUSIC





Marc Issue meets
THE GODFATHERS and is
made an offer he can't refuse.

Photograph by Russell Young.

The lads themselves don't see it in quite the same way, but from one perspective at least, the demise of the unforgettably named Sid Presley Experience last year was a big upset, certainly for those to whom they represented rock music's last visible hope of reviving itself from MTV bland-out. Believe me, there were quite a few people in that select and covert category. Dismay was piled upon disappointment when the divorce turned out so nasty and acrimonious, lawsuits flying about and what have you. These things take time — lawyers see to it that they take ages. But thankfully the Brothers Coyne have emerged with a new project which is, as they say, the same only better.

The Godfathers have released two singles thus far, the enigmatic *Capo da Tutti Capi* statement of intent ("I'm a Lonely Man...") and the triumphant *This Damn Motion* which, unbelievably, has even scaled the American Dance Charts. So far they haven't been over to reinforce the interest across the Atlantic, but they're doing just fabulously in Europe. "Finland really gets slagged off everyone takes the piss out of the place, but it's really nice, we had a great time."

"I suppose having twenty thousand of them screaming blue murder at us had something to do with it. Shall we pretend it's Wogan, and plug the new product?"

Be my guest. Go right ahead.

"The new record is a double A side single of the great Rolf Harris hit of 1962, *Sun Arise* and a new Godfathers composition, *I Want Everything*. In *Scarface*, the thing that keeps him going is the words, 'the world is yours' flashing in front of him time after time. Without going over the top this goes, 'I want money, I want sex, I want power! But we don't really just want all that, so we put in, 'someone to love, someone to talk to, something to do and something to look forward to', which was Elvis Presley's response when someone asked him for his philosophy of life. The stuff about 'Instant coffee, instant sex' and all that was taken from a Beatles press conference of 1964 where they said they liked everything *instant*. So the song is bringing those two philosophies face to face."

The Godfathers are among the most sophisticated contemporary exponents of rock'n'roll per se. They play conviction music, coloured and shaded where their previous Experience was starkly black and white. They achieve this because they bring ferocious and uncompromising intelligence to the construction of their work, and yet they sustain a belief in rock'n'roll that touches religious fervour, the way some people manage to preserve the belief that we live in a democracy.

So how shall we summarise everything I've left out?

"I think people will want to know what we think about things outside music. You can talk about the music as much as you like, but in the end, when people come to the gigs or listen to the records, all the talking about music is irrelevant."

"MEATLOAF???" exploded a friend of mine down the phone. "Meatloaf represents everything I hate about Americans, everything I hate about fat people, everything I hate about heterosexual men, and everything I hate about rock music." Well, there's a starting point.

"I don't like hip. Don't even consider calling me 'hip,'" explodes Meatloaf across a record company desk. This is what is known as a pre-emptive strike. "You can insult me in many ways, but don't call me hip".

So that's that one out of the way. Meatloaf, Monster of Rock, insists that he is a philosopher. He looks rather healthier in the flesh than the sleeve photographs indicate. There's not quite as much of him as there used to be. Meatloaf has a curious perspective on the history of the postwar years which cannot, alas, be examined in this short space. The bottom line — as it was in the beginning — is that Meatloaf is not a man with much going for him in the credibility stakes. Nonetheless, he is here to proclaim his new record.

The news is that the album is produced by Frank Farrian, veteran of the Boney M hits and the mastermind, if that's the word I'm looking for, behind the Far Corporation's saccharine clone version of *Stairway to Heaven*. Perhaps a remarkable meeting of minds, perhaps not.

"My mind thinks like a thirteen year old,"



says Meatloaf. "My wife says, 'hey there's my three children again, outside', you know? I like change, I like moving from one day to the next. I've got new musicians, younger kids around me now. My guitarist will be trying something out and he'll go 'naah, that ain't

modern'. That's what I heard right through the record, these young players coming in saying, 'naah, I don't like that, that ain't modern'. These kids come in, and so I learn from them, I listen to what they do, and I go, 'hey, that must be modern!' I've never been

hip, and I've never been modern!"

The new Meatloaf record is made by a man who will never be hip, and will never be modern. *Plus ça change*, and rock the house, furthermore. Meatloaf fans will not be disappointed.

Marc Issue

ALBUM REVIEWS

Bruce Dessau investigates the new releases.

It's that time of year again. What with Wham! wrapping it up for good, Sigue Sigue shut down in flames and the killing of Mister George, stardom is up for grabs. The throne of Brit pop has never been so vacant, the pretenders to it never so vacuous. From Chicago to the suburbs of Greater Manchester there blows not so much a wind of change as a lot of hot air.

Honorary Mancunians **Big Flame** would have you believe, on the sleeve notes of *Two Kan Guru* (Ron Johnson Record), that they were once part of George and Andy's band but were sacked for being too ugly. *Two Kan Guru*, it goes on, contains early **Big Flame** singles, original demos of which featured the dulcet strains of Michael and Ridgeley. But these artefacts are not aired; instead we have a series of vicious, scowling guitars, scraped and scratched as if suffering from a bad dose of scurvy. There's a linear progression from Beefheart through to noise merchants of today and back to the Gang Of Four. Too tunesome for the Whamboys methinks. But somewhere in there I'm sure I spotted the riff — well a note or two at least of — *Wake Me Up Before You Go Go*.

Golden Plunder indeed. As with LA cosmetic surgeons, it's just a case of a few lifts here and there for producers these days. A bit of stitching back together and you've got another success on your hands. **The House Sound Of Chicago** (London) has taken all this to its logical end. Acts become anonymous with this form of amorphous dance music. Producers working under various identities, JM Silk and Farley Jackmaster Funk being the two most noteworthy, create a riff, a grind, a rhythm, from which a formula is stretched both gossamer thin and sledgehammer heavy. It's pure body

music, aimed more at your nearest Warehouse Party than Pineapple Studios, but demanding similar physical commitment. Chicago as this year's Washington, anyone?

That can't be the best of news for **Full Force**, whose *Get Busy One Time* (CBS) just about beats Chicago to the racks. Part of the Lisa Lisa Cult Jam set-up, with Hitman Howie Tee sharing various writing credits, this is yet more groove-worthy hard'n'heavy hip hop, a sound which seems to date in a way that Rock and Roll never has — maybe it's only through Run — DMC's unholy marriage to rock and Aerosmith that this rap funk thang can persist. But it's a tough business. No sooner does one outfit toss out a crust of innovation than it is set upon and recycled by a thousand B-Boy imitators, ending up no doubt on some mid-Brookside commercial for cereals. A not so fitting end for many.

But this is the nature of vogue-ism in designer times (more about those later). **Chaka Khan** and **Al Jarreau** have got more lasting intentions in mind for their female/male soul pop calling cards. There's a world of difference — even when Chaka is using rappers on her records — between the hip hop axis and soul. Black music is all too easily boxed up together in a way one would never attempt with honky tunes — **Motorhead's** *Orgasmatron* (albeit produced by Bill Laswell) and **The Smiths** in the same genus? Both Chaka and Jarreau, on *Destiny* (Elektra) and *L Is For Lover* (WEA) have wheeled in Brit Crit Green Gartside to pen the respective album-pushing hit singles, *Love Of A Lifetime* and *Jarreau's* title track. Both produced by Arif Mardin, each contains the DNA of Real Pop Stuff: hooks aplenty, and the nursery rhyme simplicity that tends to be wanting on Green's own ventures. And both are firmly rooted in mid seventies funk, a time when voice was more important than technology. With their tremendous timbres, both note-perfect and honeyed, who would have ever considered the need for electronic embellishment? Conservatism should be no hinderer of hits with pipes like these.

Tracey Thorn seems to have been taking a few lessons and borrowing a few phrases from Dusty Springfield on *Baby*, The Stars Shine Bright (*Blanco Y Negro*). With the current **Everything But The Girl** single *Come On Home*, Tracey and Ben Watt have gone for the epic content of great singers of the sixties (female division), smattering the torch mob with the lilting tones of a Convent-educated Patsy Cline. Long gone is the 'new jazz' tag; farewell too to the accusations of Smiths plagiarism. There's more of a fledgling Costello in the wordplay here, plus the gilded romanticism of the tearjerking *A Country Mile* and *Come Hell Or High Water*. Ben Watt refrains from singing this time round too, which gives the production greater definition. **Everything But The Girl** are really becoming a band rather than a boy/girl soap opera for bequipped hipsters.

I'd always considered Tracey Thorn's vocals to be particularly idiosyncratic, hardly mimicable. Yet **Mary Coughlan**, on *Tired And Emotional* (Mystery), begs the comparison. She is that rare talent, a voice that two years ago was confined to the bathtub, and that now, untutored, can take on all manner of song — jazz, blues, country, even ragtime, and all on one album. The unjust have her down as an Irish Sade, but that's a yardstick that does neither party justice. Reputedly tempestuous live, and reputedly due over here any time now, more ought to be heard of Ms Coughlan.

What will inevitably hold Mary Coughlan back, however, is the inevitable inability to pigeonhole her. This designer lifestyle dilemma means that if your disc can't be racked in a particular section, it might not be racked at all. **Stephen Duffy** is a nifty little sparrow in the works who continues to defy definition. Until now he has been plundering pop's past for gems — *Because We Love You* charted much the same territory as *EBTG's* current LP, but Duffy has moved about eight steps forward and thirteen back with *Designer Beatnik* (10) where he assumes, with former Pigbag-er Roger Freeman, the mantle of **Dr Calculus**, another

loosely-based-for-fear-of-reprisals Tin Tin character. Notice that 'designer' tag again? Duffy virtually ships in every musical gimmick and gizmo of the last year or so. There's sleng teng, every technological device that Propaganda ever tried, and even some cartoon characters à la Bang Zoom Let's Go Go. It's painfully catchy, painfully clever — but probably too much so for a public yet to succumb fully to the wiles of even his more straightforward ventures.

Even reggae has got to move on and acknowledge the eighties, but I'm not sure if **Ini Kamoze's** *Island LP* is the way to go about it. It's sprite tight disco rather than dancehall style, aided by Sly and etc and 'specially remixed' by New York mixmaster, mad genius and year before last's thing, Paul 'Groucho' Smykle. Then he goes and spoils it all by wearing something stoopid like a South Molton St suit with resplendent *Lion Of Judah* motifs. Designer Rastafarianism, yeugh!

Rock and Roll, meanwhile, trundles on regardless of trend, various factions still searching furiously for the quintessential R&R, oblivious to current moods. **Soul Asylum**, *Rough Trade's* first, shall we say, 'hardcore' signing, pursue a particularly feverish furrow. All still in their teens, this clan take the sheer velocity of *Hüsker Dü* and hone it down into a more garage-like beast. The vocals still have that Bob Mould-y tinge, from a forty-a-day throat of one too young to smoke at all.

REM are still reconstructing myths on *Life's Rich Pageant* (MCA). Drop the stylus at any point and it could be, well, '67, '68, or '69 — the Byrds, *Loving Spoonful*, *The Monkees*, or *Quicksilver Messenger Service*. They even indulge in a notable *Velvets* homage, *Flowers Of Guatemala*, a tinkling forage through the jangly undergrowth. It's all quintessential melody, heard a thousand times before but still rich, and *Michael Stipes'* vocals never sounded more Rock and Roll outlaw than on *These Days*.

Talking Heads have taken a rear-guard avant-garde action. Either David Byrne is artfully saving all that artiness for his solo work (and the

Stepping out to a sea of Cult fans on their first tour, back in '84, BALAAM AND THE ANGEL were assured of long term Goth devotion, "despite the fact we made a point of wearing white," they sigh. "We're not a Goth band, but you're linked in and you have to make your way merrily along." They don't actually fit comfortably into any cliché. The Punk/Hippy stickers have come off in the wash, but despite much wielding of thunderous bass and some leonine strutting, there's still something that saves them from hard rock.

"Tunes", they sweetly chorus. "When we first started," says Mark, thinking fondly of the times when he and brothers Jim and Des were bottled off stages in Working Men's Clubs, "we didn't know much about tunes. Everything sounded really dull, so we spent a while working on that and now we want to get that hard edge back."

The rousing *Day And Night* broke away from the guitar based sound of two earlier EPs. "We spent six months experimenting with different instruments," explains Jim, "like the brass on *Slowdown*, but we gradually moved to a more commercial sound we weren't particularly happy with. Now we want to get back to something rockier."

The Greatest Story Ever Told LP follows this line of thought, and bursts and squelches through the walls of musical definition. "Normally," says Jim, "a band will start off as a conglomeration of different things, and then narrow it down and perpetuate the band sound over and over." Balaam are working from the other end. "When we were younger, we used to like the

same stuff. We used to dress the same, and put our money together to buy Clash albums. Now we're developing our tastes and getting more and more diverse. We're all pulling bits of what we like into the band."

"We hate each other," chuckles Mark, "totally disagree with each other, and that's what gives us our sound. We take things from a lot of songs, mix them

together, and that's how it comes out – always a mix of three elements."

Not that their sources are ever identifiable. Balaam perform a happy and unavoidable metamorphosis: "I'll listen to Marc Bolan then write a song and it comes out like Iron Maiden... sort of." Mark shakes his head, perplexed. "I'm a catalyst."

Sorrel Downer



The tiny lady in the pink satin dress twisted round to the band and pulled out a vocal riff that drew a gasp from the musicians as well as from the audience. She pulled her right leg back and let out a huge kick at the end of the phrase as if to say: "There! That's the spot!"

A couple of days before ANITA BAKER'S remarkable Hammersmith Odeon performance she was reflecting on the pleasures of having just hit number one on the US Radio and Record chart. A joy that was all the sweeter when she recollected that five years ago she had regarded her musical career as over after a callous record company had dropped the option on her group saying that she didn't have what it takes.

That first group, Chapter 8, was one of the premier bands in her hometown Detroit during the mid seventies and had been Anita's launching pad from the various top forty cover bands which she had played in since her teens. Abandonment by the record company left Anita so despondent that she couldn't face returning to the local music scene and left music altogether and took to waiting tables at a club called The Wildcats Lounge, though she soon found a job in rather more savoury surroundings as a receptionist in a legal firm.

It was there that Otis Smith, who had worked for her previous record company, persuaded her to quit job security and signed her to Beverly Glen Records in 1982. They recorded the classic *Songstress* album and it looked like her career had finally turned the corner. Not quite. The album sold more than 300,000 copies according to her lawyers, but Anita didn't see a penny of royalties.

It took the heavyweight help of a new manager Sherwin Bash to win the legal actions which left her free to sign with Elektra and record *Rapture* where as executive producer she hired several of the top jazz and soul musicians to make an album which is smoother and jazzier than its predecessor.

Now, at least, she seems to be out of the wood. A vocalist of genuine classic quality, she manages to control her breathtaking vocal crescendos with an innate sense of musicality. This control has led to comparisons with the classic jazz singers, and indeed her London concert came after a performance at the Montreux jazz festival singing jazz standards with a band led by George Duke. Certainly, she's a class above all the other soul singers to have emerged in the last few years. Let's hope she's now left all her troubles well and truly behind.

Dave Kay

reputed forthcoming T Heads movie) or he's finally achieving his childhood dream of playing in a real Rock Combo. Or both. Their latest EMI warning has Byrne seeking out his beat roots and coming on like Jonathan Richman. Most vocalists seem to get gruffer as they age; Byrne's nervy vocalities though seem to have returned to pre-pubesence, a highness quivering an octave or two just below Tiny Tim. The loony toons have been replaced by a raw, rare innocence, as if he's been a trifle too long under primal therapy. He's a bit confused by technology here – the Once In A Lifetime condition; on Radio Head he thinks that his head has turned into, yes, a radio. Maybe he's suffering from Byrne out. But his latest album is a blinding back-in-the-loft first time out treat.

Get Wise (Partrair/CBS) purports to bring us the hottest, sharpest new jazz around town at the moment. Loose Tubes have already been widely hailed as jazz saviours in the free-er arena; Courtney Pine is already tagged or anchored to a Coltrane heritage; Steve Williamson, who plays in Pine's Jazz Warriors is already touted as even-better-than-Courtney in certain quarters. All are in fine authentic fettle here, and are balanced by the more accessible pop jazz of Danger Zone. Team 10 and No Pearls No Passion. Pine's own Island LP is released in September, when we shall really see whether this Jazz business can ever catch on. In the mean time, Get Wise does provide a good sampler of the mixed London circuit at the moment. Streetsounds, meanwhile, get streetwise. Twiggling that Jean Carn is playing London at the end of the month, they've released a set featuring the soul chanteuse's finest moments, including the powerful torch-y If You Don't Know Me By Now.

And so it goes on: back catalogues crashing into revived readings of other people's, and other genre's, back catalogues. But occasionally, as with REM and Talking Heads, a good, old idea is reappropriated and well-recrafted. The flaccid still has enough substance to make you go all whoopsy now and again. . . .

There's a strange conception fluffing around the heads of popular music critics at the moment, that appropriation and imitation are somehow Good Things, however bland, if they come from some new corner of the room. Hence the totally unjustified delight at The New Rock, The Return Of The Guitar and even Australia As The Rock And Roll Capital Of The World. I'd wholeheartedly dispute all those claims, but if any is to be taken heed of, it's possibly the latter, primarily on the strength of a group called THE TRIFFIDS.

Whilst several miles away from the guitar theatrics of REM and their ilk, with whom they are oddly often compared, The Triffids still manage to make interesting shivers out of the old bass, guitar and drums building blocks.

"There is an appeal in that fairly traditional style," says singer David McComb, as we sit in a pub bandying words about The Triffids' new LP, *Born Sandy Devotional*. "It's not something we're going to be constricted by though. I mean, I hate REM and all that country rock stuff. I much prefer people like Prince and Janet Jackson. One of our new songs even sounds like Madonna. We're going to surprise a lot of our fans with it."

I'm not alone in having found the two Triffids LPs prior to this exceedingly humdrum and more often than not just plain boring.

"They were definitely a kind of testing ground and perhaps we held back too much on them. In our old town there was always this feeling that we were just The Triffids and that we'd never REALLY make it big. Maybe we had too much of that attitude in ourselves at the time. We've certainly got over it now."

Is it naive of me to think of you as an Australian band?

"I don't know. We come from Australia, we can't deny that, and there are a lot of things about us which are inherently Australian, but I don't want us to get a reputation of being the band who write about Australian towns and big wide roads all the time."

Born Sandy Devotional is a small, almost perfect record. The songs always seem to be about you but never forget that a bridge is just a bridge and a pop song just a pop song. There are parts to tug your heart out and a few quiet moments that can inspire or crush depending on the wind. The Triffids are already here. *Paul Mathur*



"I'd like it to be known," said Sophie in her best Sermon On The Mount voice, "that this is only one side of us. We're capable of much more."

This is Sophie Johnston talking, brother of Peter and one half of the SOPHIE AND PETER JOHNSTON duo. They have just made a very commercial record called *Happy Together* and are now apologising for it. Although why they seem so ashamed of making pop records, and so keen to present their baby as if it were the result of some dreadful accident, I don't know. Perhaps they're both in thrall to the NME, poor darlings.

And so, onwards through a series of knee-jerk responses. Do they like the Radio 1 playlist? No, of course not. Do they like the output of the indie scene? Yes, of course they do. Do they approve of the majors? No, of course not but yes, it would be nice if more people were prepared to work within them because, well, at the end of the day it's all a question of compromise, isn't it? This last revelation must have assumed the proportions of a Damascus experience to explain why a band who once had their own independent label called, prosaically enough, Smash The Majors are now on Warner Brothers (albeit through I-Major).

"I think it's healthy that some sort of relationship should be struck up between the indie labels and the majors; otherwise they'll just self-destruct." Amazing, isn't it, how we all dress up our self-interest in the clothes of dispassionate reason? Still, the English have never liked the sound of other people's ambition, so I suppose we promote this sort of fudge.

So, Peter and Sophie are a happy couple who make commercial records which do, it must be said, sound a little twee. Not that twee is necessarily bad you understand; twee is just twee, or can even be fun. As their press release loquaciously puts it "...amidst desultory bands brandishing angry guitars, whose obscurity is matched only by their musical ineptitude, amongst the joy-breaking insignificance there was a flash of brilliance (Sophie and Peter Twee) extruding beautiful sounds from synthesizer digitalia (synth-pop), a musical revelation (a twiddly bit of kissy romance) and the antithesis of everything else before (another love song)." So I popped the 'musical revelation' onto my turntable and lo!

the synths did go tinkle-tonkle-dinkle-donkle with the underlying throb of a venal bassline at their heart. An acoustic guitar plucked up some gobstopper-coloured notes and put them down carefully in a pleasing order, while other bits of it just sighed for love in the background. This is also deliberate, 'the

antithesis of everything else before' and I suppose the half-digested Marxist jargon sits easy only in the sense that the song is a simple dialectic, about as sophisticated as Question 1 on the CSE maths paper, which is mechanically worked through to its logical conclusion — a fade-out. *Jeremy Lewis*



PETER CASE, of Buffalo, NY., is your turn on the fifteen-minutes-machine. Encased in Geffen's summer offensive (objective: to provide us with an American Billy Bragg, not something it had ever occurred to me to want before, but that's showbiz) is Peter Case himself, a veteran of West Coast power pop combo The Plimsouls. Let me say right now that until I read the press release I had never heard of The Plimsouls, but I have heard of a man who has both their records, and so I'll go along with it.

He has been compared to Bob Dylan, which won't do people's preconceptions about him any good at all when he finally comes over to do some solo gigs in September or October. Meanwhile,

you should hear The Album, imaginatively titled *Peter Case*. It was produced by old Texas compadres T-Bone Burnett and Mitchell Froom. It was Burnett, I suppose, who suggested that Case perform a cover of *A Pair of Brown Eyes*.

"Yes," said Peter Case, in a hotel room in Detroit. He was talking into the telephone. "That's right."

Well, that's telephone interviews for you. Everything flattens out into nothing. So where were we?

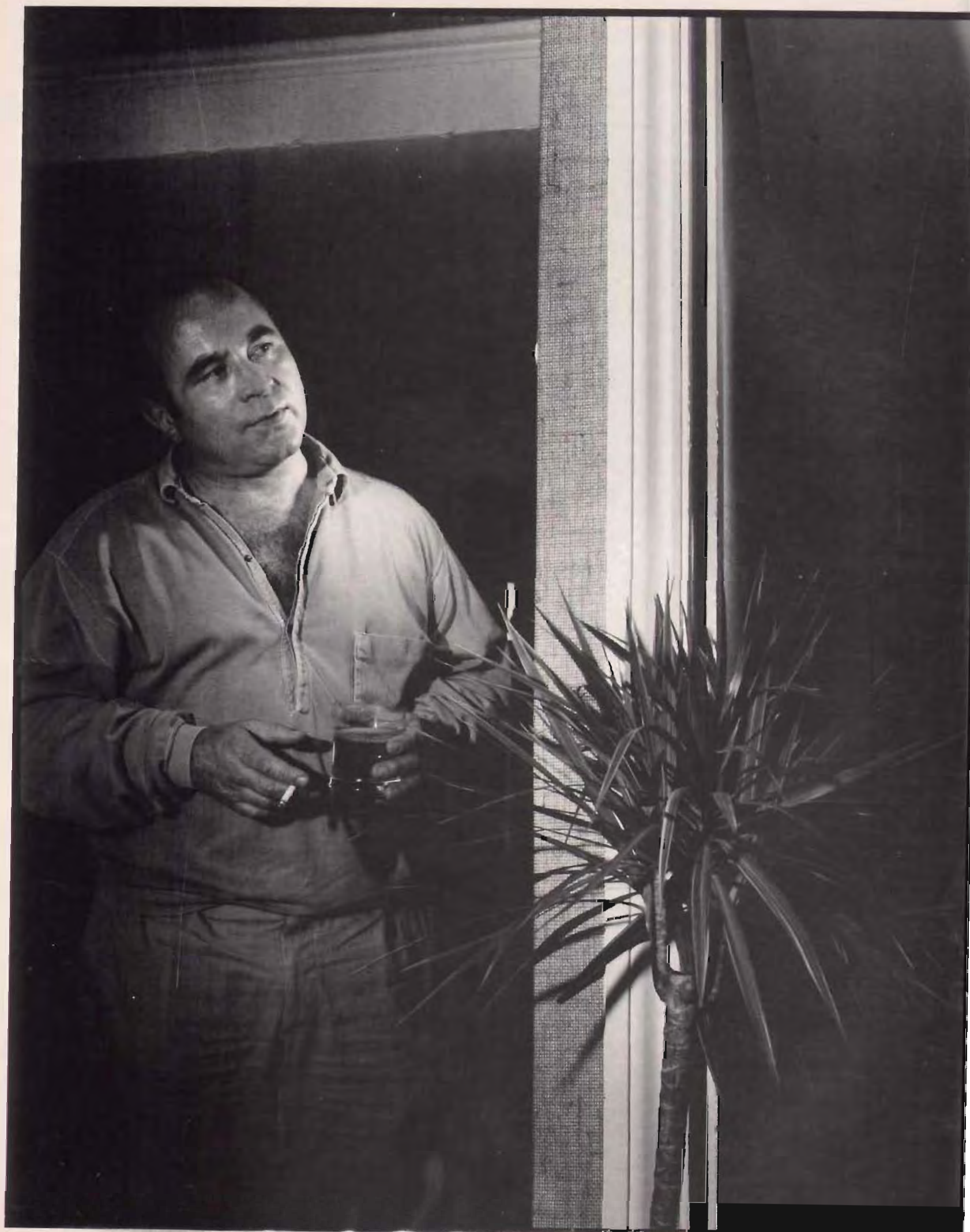
The album is excellent, in a rudimentary, back to basics kind of way, so rush out and listen to it before back-to-basics goes out of fashion again. It won't be long now... *Marc Issue*



MARTINI



The long one.
Martini Bianco





Bob Hoskins
made his
name as the
brutal
gangster

Harold Shand in *The Long Good Friday*
and has since become one of Britain's
most respected performers on both stage
and screen. This month sees the release of
two new films

starring the
London-born
actor, Neil
Jordan's
Mona Lisa
and Alan
Alda's *Sweet
Liberty*.



“was actually in the bar of an amateur theatre –
pissed – and they were doing auditions. I was
waiting for a mate and the guy came up and said,
'Right, you're next, have you seen the script?' I
said something like 'What does it look like?' and
he said, 'Would you like to read that aloud?' And I
got the lead in this play...

"An agent came along first night and said, 'You
should get into it professionally.' I said, 'Well, get me a
job and I will.' So she did and I've been an actor ever
since."

By now all those aspiring thespians out there, the
dedicated souls who have starved, suffered and
scrounged for their art, fawned and fibbed for
interviews and auditions, will no doubt be bent double
in envious nausea at this unbelievable sequence of
good fortune. Bob Hoskins managed to skip the
mandatory hair-shirt and mental masturbation chapter
in the acting manual. It is said you make your own
luck, but providence of this order defies all such
maxims.

But let's not forget that the boy Hoskins can act a bit.
Not for nothing did he win a Best Actor award at this
year's Cannes Film Festival for his work in Neil Jordan's

Interview by Mark Brennan. Photograph by Liam Woon.

► *Mona Lisa*, which is released here shortly. He is modest enough to express disbelief over the honour but a second film, Alan Alda's *Sweet Liberty*, also opening soon, points not just to an impressive work-rate but also to the stocky Londoner's burgeoning international reputation.

As we talk, a PR person remains awkwardly on hand, normally a sign of a skittish or distrustful interviewee. She replenishes Hoskins' gin and tonic at regular intervals and he drinks and smokes greedily. An elusive tension fills the air. Rocking to and fro on his chair, chinking his glass on the highly polished table with each forward motion, he resembles one of these toy plastic birds forever dipping its beak into a beaker of water. Or perhaps a squat human metronome counting out the uneasy silence.

Hoskins looks like a duck, I have decided, all fluffy body and no legs, with a broad nib of a nose sloping down towards the wide mouth. He also looks like someone you wouldn't want to meet down a dark alley. He can't be much more than five feet, but turn him on his side and he's probably taller. The atmosphere seems oddly strained, the civility forced. He is irritated by my opening question about his early career, impatient and obstructive. "Do I have to go through all that again?" he groans.

It is precisely this pugnacious dimension of his character which John Mackenzie exploited to such dynamic effect in *The Long Good Friday*. Hoskins played Harold Shand, a London villain whose stranglehold on the capital's underworld is threatened when unknown interlopers seek to sabotage his operation. It is a tough, nasty thriller, but totally absorbing in its depiction of organised crime and the dispassionate, systematic brutality on which it relies. Hoskins was established as a screen gangster in the Cagney mould.

In both mood and milieu *Mona Lisa* owes much to Mackenzie's film. It is Jordan's third outing, following the success of *Angel* and *Company of Wolves*, and provides ample proof of his growing assuredness behind the camera. He also co-wrote the screenplay, but Hoskins was initially unimpressed. "It was a good thriller script," he recalls, "but I didn't want to do it. It was a bit Ramboesque."

Whether he thought himself too tall or too good-looking to emulate Sylvester Stallone isn't clear. What is clear is that the script needed rewriting. The story concerns a small-time crook who, on his release from prison, goes to work chauffeuring an expensive call-girl between her wealthy London clients. His initial animosity towards her turns to love and, at her request, he furrows deeper into the squalid, treacherous world of vice to rescue a young prostitute. It was Hoskins' wish to develop the love story between the two central characters.

"Most films today are based on hatred and revenge, but the thing about *Mona Lisa* is the fact that its whole core is love. Awful things do happen, but they happen because somebody loves somebody. I suppose the main thing that interested me was to turn a man, who had a sense of decency and was quite naive, into a kind of hero. There's nothing I do in that film that any man on the street couldn't do. He don't go kung-fu-ing people all over the place. You'll find hundreds of 'em out there. They're the backbone of England and that's not something to be ashamed of."



BOB HOSKINS AS A SMALL-TIME CROOK TURNED CHAUFFEUR IN NEIL JORDAN'S *MONA LISA*...

Hoskins grew up in Finsbury Park, a stranger to the villainy he has perpetrated on film, and left school at 15 to train as an office clerk. He later worked as a road-digger, a Covent Garden porter, and even studied for three years to be an accountant. "I joined the Norwegian Navy for two weeks because I fancied being a Viking, a bit of rape and pillage. But I got in there and there was no fuckin' rape and pillage going, so I jumped ship in Amsterdam."

In the sixties the bohemian life lured him away from England. He made it as far as the Middle East. A beatnik? "I don't know what I was really. I couldn't have labelled myself." Eventually he beat it back to that bar in the amateur theatre and beatification in a different (dis)guise.

He is now a seasoned globe-trotter. Last year, for example, he made *Mussolini and I* for Italian television, *The Dunera Boys* for Australian television, and *Sweet Liberty* in the US. But unlike many of our top artists he stays unfailingly attached to his country of birth.

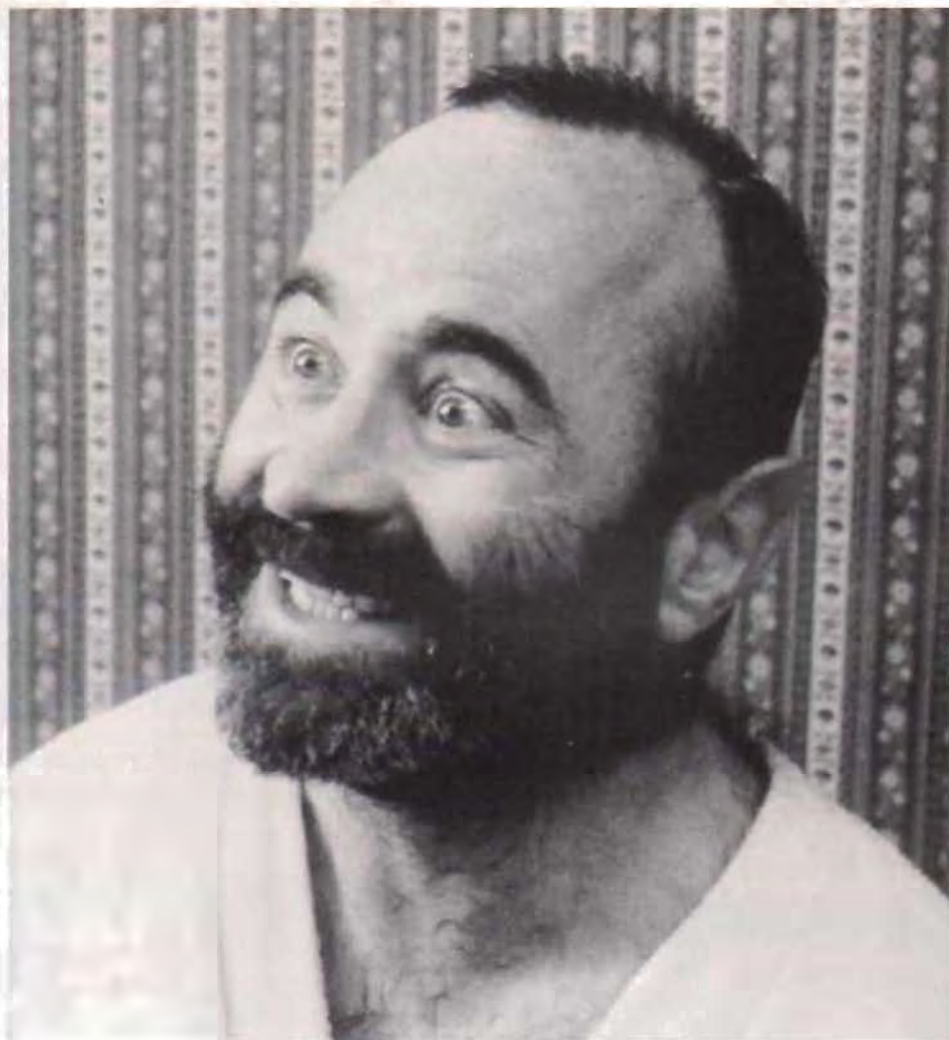
"The funny thing is that people are the same all over the world. People are people; they might have been fed all sorts of funny ideas but basically they're alright, people. I like people. I lived with the Zulus for a time (during the making of *Zulu Dawn*) and they are exactly

the same, they've got their Auntie Lill and their Uncle Fred...

"I'm a city boy and the point is with me I like England. My friends are here and I like the weather. I do like the weather. If you spend your time in LA particularly there are blue skies all the time and no seasons. And I like the seasons. I like the trees turning brown, I like the wind and the rain in my face ... This is home and this is where I come back to."

This is also the home to which Michael Caine, doyen of British cinema, has returned after many years in self-imposed exile. Caine and Hoskins first met on the set of *The Honorary Consul*, taken from Graham Greene's novel and once more directed by John Mackenzie. "I think it had been some time since he'd actually talked to a Londoner and after an hour nobody around us could understand a word we were saying."

The two men are now the firmest of friends. It is encouraging to learn, moreover, that they have discussed the possibility of getting into film production in a few years' time. "Michael's reached the point now where he wants to be the fellah who goes home when it's raining – that's the producer. He's actually got a real love of good cinema, though he has done some extraordinary shit. He's had the most



...AND AS AN OBSEQUIOUS SCREENWRITER IN ALAN ALDA'S *SWEET LIBERTY*.

extraordinary career I've ever known because he's done some of the best performances I've ever seen and some of the worst shit I've ever seen. Now I think he's interested in producing small English films."

Caine appears in both *Mona Lisa*, as the vicious manipulative head of the vice ring, and *Sweet Liberty*, as a danger-loving libertine actor. The latter film is Alan Alda's affectionate satire on the current state of the film industry, wherein a film crew descends on a slumbering US town to shoot a love story set during the American Revolution. The script for said saga, which has been adapted from historically authentic, lyrical work by a local academic (Alda), conforms to the director's three-point recipe for commercial success, in other words, (a) defy authority, (b) destroy property, (c) take people's clothes off.

"I play the screenwriter," explains Hoskins, "who's written a kind of Carry On Up The Revolution." An obsequious individual with a dress sense to rival Rupert the Bear's and a talent only for manipulating the outsized egos around him, he persuades the academic to defy the director and reinstate some dialogue from the original book in the hope of basking in a little reflected literary glory.

As satire, *Sweet Liberty* is fairly toothless and it lacks

the sheer wit of Alda's earlier *The Four Seasons*. Even so it is well played, nicely irreverent and exerts considerable charm. And any film that can entice the 90-year-old Lillian Gish back to the screen can't be half-bad.

Hoskins' theatre work has been no less prestigious than his films. He appeared in *Geography of a Horse Dreamer*, written and directed by Sam Shepard, and the same author's *True West* under John Schlesinger's direction. He also took the part of Nathan Detroit in the National's production of *Guys and Dolls*. Television has been equally kind to him. He was Iago in Jonathan Miller's version of *Othello* and recorded a notable early triumph in Dennis Potter's *Pennies From Heaven*, for which he won a BAFTA nomination. His further cinema credits, meanwhile, take in Alan Parker's *The Wall*, Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* and Francis Coppola's *The Cotton Club*.

It is a little-known detail that the self-deprecating Cockney has "been writing since I could spell." Seven years ago he even had a play performed in Paris, entitled *Dog's Dinner*. Now he has written a screenplay about the plight of gypsies in wartime which he hopes to direct later this year. His empathy with the Romany

people and all itinerants dates back to his own travelling days and is clearly no idle romantic notion.

"Basically it's about people avoiding war and it's mixed up with an old gypsy legend. The Jews had a terrible time in the war but the gypsies had an even worse time. The camps were full of gypsies but the Jews have got a better publicity agent. All through the ages the persecution of the Jews and the gypsies has gone hand-in-hand."

An estimated 500,000 gypsies met death at the hands of the Nazis. However, recent newspaper reports concerning a Swiss charity suggest that Hitler's thugs did not have the monopoly on this victimization. The Pro Juventute Foundation has offered to pay compensation for its state-sponsored campaign to eradicate "the evil of vagrancy". With police support, the Children of the Road campaign, launched in 1926 and directed by a senior charity official, succeeded in abducting over 600 gypsy children for reintroduction into normal Swiss society. The scheme was not abandoned until 1973, when details of its aims and practices first came to light. At home, meanwhile, the authorities have been playing political ping-pong with the hippy convoy. Is this the kind of drama Hoskins' film will depict?

"It's very much about that sort of thing. What the fuck's going on? Jesus Christ. This is a bunch of people, quite responsible, they're not violent, they're not political, all they want to do is have a little festival. And the mob that have gone down there, even the police are embarrassed. I was talking to a copper about it and he said, oh Jesus, a pain up the arse. You go down there, what do you do with people who are totally passive, they're not causing trouble and they're just being pushed around. It's a total publicity hype to discredit this kind of person. Let's face it, the way society is going at the moment, what choice have most people got but to drop out? So the government is actually closing up that alternative and turning these people into villains.

"If you've got a country with no employment, people have got to be free to create small industry themselves. They make all kinds of things and sell them; they barter and they live. So what are you going to do? Live in a council house and be refused dole? You've got to fend for yourself. And that's what this government is always talking about. Well fuck it, these people are fending for themselves and what's happening? They're getting a bashing for doing it.

"If I was out of work and I had a wife and kids and no home and no chance of earning a living, I'd get myself a wagon and take them away. I don't want my family split up. I don't want to lose my kids to some fuckin' home. I don't want Thatcher organising my life..."

He spits the words out and there's nowhere left for the conversation to go. If he can bring this same demotic fervour to his own film, it will indeed be something to see.

It's been an ordeal for him. He mutters perfunctory thanks but a certain anxiety remains. As the photographs are taken he shuffles uncomfortably under the lights' needling, scorching glare. He simmers but sees it through to the end, if not quite with a smile.

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boy of both
the media
and the
cricket
establishment.

B O
T H
A M

ON THE OPENING DAY OF THE FIRST TEST against New Zealand last month, Ian Botham was to be found not at Lord's, but in his home town of Yeovil, playing for the Somerset Second Eleven, still banned. A quaint, almost sad, sight: arguably the world's most skilled all-round cricketer, certainly the world's most outrageously daring, drawing some 30 people, including his mum and dad, to watch him get back into pro action and warm up to prove that he's now too big, and too popular, and too brilliant for the sport to survive without him.

Because when Botham's not there, most fans will tell you that that's all English cricket does: 'survive'. It doesn't excite, enthrall or scorch – it limps home, dispirited, into the pavilion most evenings, and without even a great boozing partner for the bar afterwards.

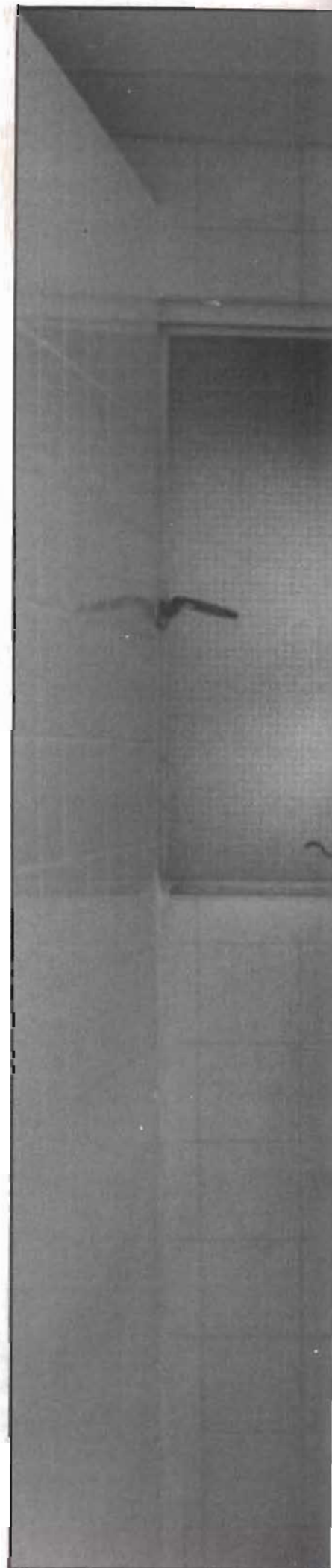
There hasn't been a cricketer like Botham since, oh, since we were born. And there hasn't been such an all-round tabloid cricket star, ever. And if you forget the glories of the '81 Headingley Test, which, with all due respect to Bob Willis, Botham won singlehandedly, his profile has never been so high as now. So why is he playing with juniors?

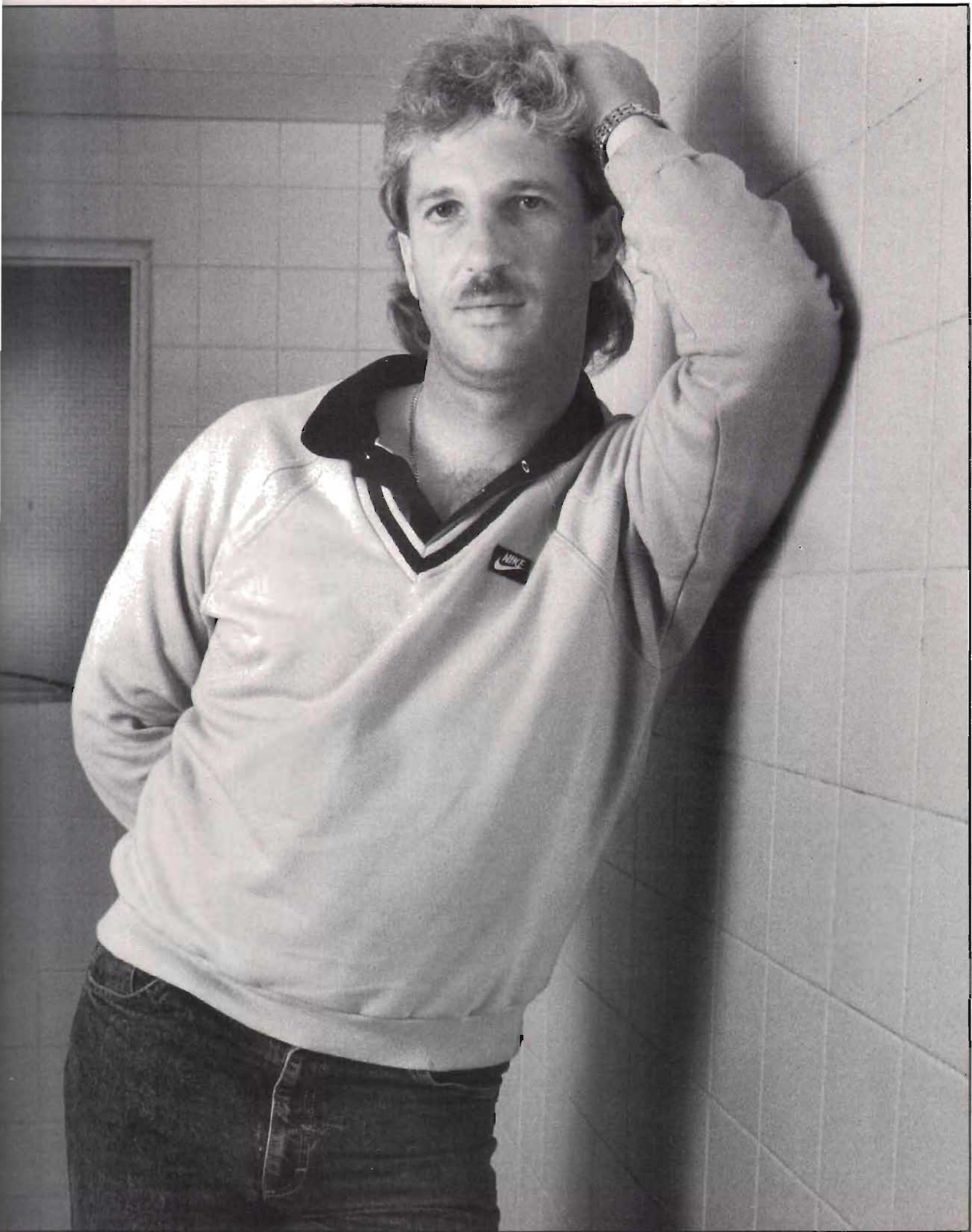
I'm watching him now, out in the Second Eleven square, huge. Seldom can the 'Gorilla' tag have been more fitting: both his physical bulk and his enormous professional status tower over his teammates. Even crouching in the slips he's by far the most impressive figure on view. Even if you'd never seen or heard of Botham before, you'd pick out the world's most prolific six-hitting wideboy, no trouble.

There's a visible arrogance about him for a start: in the slips he picks his teeth and bites his nails and pushes back his golden highlighted hair and only crouches down long after his fellow close fielders, seemingly bored out of his skull. He's not actually, but I'm sure he's aware that swagger and showmanship count for a lot these days. They are, in fact, two of the most important reasons why Botham can pack any ground in the world, but Boycott cannot.

Later, in the bar, he will admit that "you have to be a

Interview by Simon Garfield
Photographs by Richard Croft





► little bit arrogant – all the best players have arrogance.” He will also confess to “sort of” toying with the Hampshire opposition this afternoon; which is sort of a whopping understatement. Somerset won by ten wickets the following day, and Botham was clearly busting no guts. “I haven’t really made a major contribution to this game,” he says. “I didn’t want to. I just wanted to flex my muscles.” The Somerset Seconds captain Julian Wyatt saw things slightly differently: captaining Ian, he said, was the “easiest job I ever had. Ian told me when he proposed to bowl – and when he was coming off.”

He’s playing down here, of course, because it’s the only near-pro game since Lord’s banned him for nine weeks after he admitted taking dope “in his youth”. But he’s here too because he clearly loves the local camaraderie attendant with returning to the roots of his childhood.

Several of his old school friends are in the bar tonight, helping Ian down four pints in an hour on an empty stomach. Included in the party is ex-Manchester City footballer Gerry Gow who now manages Yeovil FC and desperately wants Ian to play for the team next season as he did last. Ian has to decline – “too full up”. The gathering is a hearty, backslapping, all-male affair, with Botham effortlessly the ringleader. Everyone laughs at almost everything he says.

The bar is part of Westland Sport and Social Club – decidedly the coolest place to be on the day that the committee report on the Westland Affair will severely embarrass the Tory government. The helicopter company is 200 yards up the road and has provided employment for Botham’s father for many years – previously as a test engineer and now as a recruitment officer touring the colleges and universities. Ian’s learnt to fly during his lay-off, and this prompts the inevitable “how big’s ya chopper, Ian?” from everyone he meets. This seems like a good chummy wheeze, so:

How big is it, Ian?

Pause.

Limp or erect, I don’t mind.

“My chopper doesn’t exist at the moment... I’m actually in the process of putting a deal together now – I’d like to get a turbo Jet Ranger.”

As would we all. He informs me that a turbo Jet Ranger is an impressive bastard. He’ll need a five-hour conversion course and £140,000 to get his hands on a secondhand one, and he’s trying to organise a sponsorship deal. “I haven’t got that kind of money,” he says. “Well I probably have, but not for helicopters.”

Botham is not, in fact, a hugely wealthy man; not, at least, by other sports champion standards. It’s almost

certain that his Nike sponsorship deal and ghosted Sun column collectively earn him more than he receives from cricket – the column is worth around £20,000 annually – but it’s still nowhere near the Steve Davis or Gary Lineker league. He has a sizeable house in North Yorkshire, a Jag, a Corvette, three kids and at times a reasonably swinging lifestyle to support, and he’d still be doing great – if only it wasn’t for all those hefty fines and legal costs he has to pay these days.

Most are well documented: he was fined £1,000 by Lord’s when he played soccer for Scunthorpe and when he said he wouldn’t wish a fortnight’s holiday in Pakistan even on his mother-in-law; he was sternly bollocked for bringing the game into disrepute when he boiled over during an ‘85 Trent Bridge Test against Australia; and he offended Lord’s again when at a private dinner he referred to the Test selectors as “gin-sodden dodderers”.

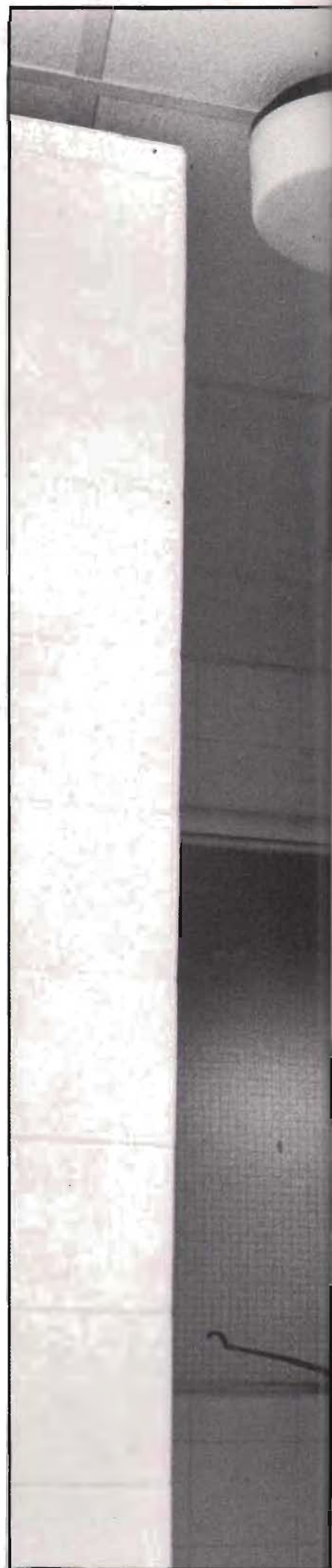
Then there were the drug scandals – the discovery of the deadly weed at his home in what Botham suspects was a “set-up”; and his Mail On Sunday confession to having the odd toke or two long ago and over the hills. Which leads onto the sex scandals, not least the “confession” in the News of the World by Barbadian Lindy Field of a one-night affair at Mick Jagger’s house, a fling apparently so wild that the bed collapsed.

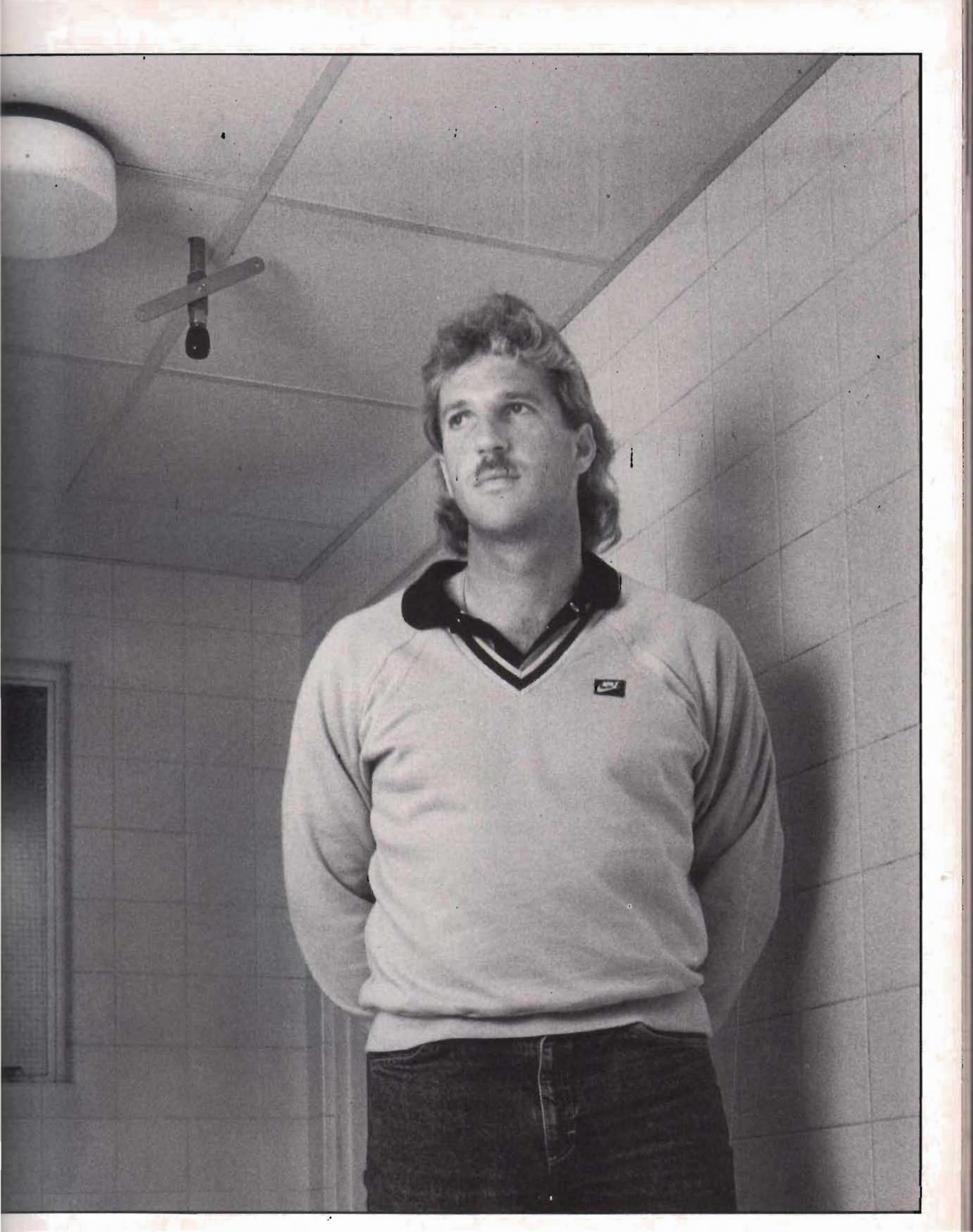
Field got £17,000 for her story; Botham got the sort of headlines he’s been fighting against for years and might now seem strangely lonely without. It is not, after all, just his cricket that has made him such a popular figure. He may well be a working-class sportsman made good, but he’s still evidently Jack-the-lad, still the belching coarse boy who opens mouth and inserts foot.

Botham himself has two lines of defence, as if any were needed. He blames his “honesty and trusting nature” for much of his extra-cricketing notoriety, and repeatedly suggests that it’s grossly unfair for anyone to expect fireworks on the field and a “platonic little angel” off it.

And beneath everything you can sense that he feels more than a little victimised, partly by the tabloids envious of his arrangement with the Sun, and partly by the incompetent and incontinent old guard of ex-cricketers envious of his money, fame, arrogance and nonconformity. As Guardian writer Frank Keating says in his illuminating and sympathetic profile of Botham, *High, Wide and Handsome*, things have got to the point where he might be fined merely for showing his emotion at the birth of his third child: “A television camera crew was at the family bedside and Ian was asked if he had considered a name for the babe.

‘Gertrude’, he announced with his widest grin – at ►





► which his son Liam piped up, 'Well I'm leaving home then'. They settled on Rebecca, though later that day I half expected to hear that Lord's had fined him £1,000 for bringing the name 'Gertrude' into disrepute."

Now aged 31, Botham hopes he can't be hurt by his knockers as once he could, and will tell you that he's now far too streetwise to be frequently stung as before. Then again, he still half anticipates the day when some desperate hack bugs his bedroom.

"These days I'll step on someone else's toes before they step on mine. You learn that, and I think I actually learnt it quite slowly. I'm generally trusting by nature, and consequently I suffered at times for it. Like you go out for a drink with someone, and the next day an article appears, and it just so happens that the journalist you went out with that evening works for the same paper that has the 'Botham Out Drinking' story. And then they wonder why I'm so cynical with them, and why I'm so bloody-minded and anti them.

"And something really disgusting happened the other day. I was staying at a friend's house in Brighton, and the postman knocked on the door and said, 'Excuse me, mate, your mail's been opened'. And it had a lot of very personal stuff in it. I just think it's the pits, but that's what I'm having to battle against – journalists actually employed to follow me full time. Christ, there must be better things in this world to spend money on than following me. Just take a look at an inner city...

"And there's a lot of jealousy – 'course there is," he says, two pints in. "Especially from some of those older players who continuously knock me, and sometimes I actually find it quite pathetic. I'm not going to name names, I'll just leave it to your imagination, but we're talking about commentators and stuff."

It's no secret that the likes of Fred Trueman, Ray Illingworth and Denis Compton are no great fans of Botham's gung-ho spirit. Last year Trueman wrote that "Botham's been bowling rubbish for fully ten years", the sort of rubbish, though, that yielded 343 Test Wickets up to the end of 1985.

"It's envy because the sport has got financially bigger, and worldwide bigger, and they (*his detractors in general*) just resent the money that the guys are making now. And the limelight they're getting. Personally I don't care if a guy is earning 25 times what I am. I mean, Elton John is a very, very close friend of mine, and he's probably one of the wealthiest men in the country. And great. Go for it, Elton – you deserve every penny you get."

Botham's attitude to money in fact is pure

Thatcherism, and all summed up sweetly by his phrase "go for it". He's not only self-made and self-taught but

entirely self-driven, and if the National Health Service is falling to pieces, and if they won't put enough money into leukaemia research, then he'll just have to walk the entire length of the country and raise about £1 million himself.

"I don't have a lot of time for left-wingers," he says. "I don't have a lot of time for people who expect everything served on a plate. You've got to go out for yourself. Free enterprise, man..."

But isn't 'writing' for the Sun just a little near the bone? Isn't the paper just a touch too obnoxious even for a man with Botham's coarse tastes?

"To be perfectly honest with you, I don't read papers very much anyway."

But, oh dear, it does sell, doesn't it?

"It does sell five million, and if you're going to write a column it makes sense to write it in the paper that's got the biggest..."

So he wouldn't be happier expressing his views in the Guardian?

"If they want to pay me the same money, I'd be quite happy. At the end of the day you've got to be mercenary about it."

In one sense his taste in newspapers is echoed in his choice of reading matter and films, not that there's much of the former.

"I read very little. The only author I've really read in any depth is Robert Ludlum – I think I've read most of his books, and I think that shows a little bit of my character. Same with my film choices. I enjoy... sort of bloody, violent thrillers. I enjoy the Eastwoods and the Stallones – I like things you don't have to sit and wrack your brains over."

It's not of course very hard to imagine Botham himself in Hollywood, not least in the sort of scenario where he plays opposite Geoffrey Boycott (a man he admits to deliberately running out for excessively selfish batting in a New Zealand Test) with lines like, "you're the disease – I'm the cure".

And Botham will confess to distinct acting possibilities, if not exactly to widely anticipated Stallone-style ambitions.

"No, no, Clint Eastwood! I think he's a great actor. I think he revolutionised the film world. You don't have to sit and use your brain. And he comes up with some great one-liners: 'Go ahead and make my day, punk...' (*chortles*)... and he's got a gun at his head! Great one-liners..."

If he's watched *Dirty Harry* once he's watched it 30 times, but invariably at home on video. For he's not just a singular man, but, through circumstance, something of a solitary one. "It's hard to go anywhere now," he says, and when he is out invariably he can't be fully himself, can't knock off duty. In a recent Time Out

profile his Somerset captain Peter Roebuck called him "a lonely man, perhaps the loneliest I've ever met."

"I am in some ways," says Botham. "Because of the sheltered life I have to lead because of the media. But the friends that I do have are very good friends, and we have a good time. But maybe it's not what Peter Roebuck thinks is a good time."

"Still, everybody is entitled to their own opinion. I've known Peter since I was 14 and I get on well with him. But I think that article just goes to show how few people know me. He's close in some departments, but a long way off in others. There's only one man that knows me really well – Viv Richards. He'd never write anything on me and I'd never write anything about Viv. We have too high a regard for each other's friendship. It's more than that – we are literally brothers. Our friendship goes so deep that there's nothing that he doesn't know or I wouldn't tell him."

"But unless you really know me, I think it's very hard to draw any conclusions. I think a lot of people are fishing in the dark, the media certainly. They don't realise just how intricate the machinery is."

Between bar and picture shoot Botham confesses he's itching to get back into first team and Test games again, not least the winter tour of Australia, and he suggests he has "two or three years at the top" left in him. He says he then may do "a very interesting book that won't be censored by Lord's," and feels he had "the drive, the willpower and enough intelligence to branch out into anything I want to. I have a very high IQ anyway. I had a test as a joke, and I actually shocked the people who were around."

How high was it?

"Oh, I'm not going to say, but it was very, very high, let's put it that way."

Two minutes later I ask him whether he's heard the current England Test score.

"The last I heard was 90 for one," he says. "Moxon made 70, and Gower made 60-odd. Gatting was out for two."

His posing is as duff as his maths. For a man undeniably conscious of his public image, it's surprising how little time he's got to be photographed in anything but a lumpen, leaden state. In many ways the coarse, country bumpkin style of his youth is with him still, probably always will be.

"God, did you hear him?" asks photographer Richard Croft after the shoot. "Farting and belching all over the place. Christ, I don't know... the most famous cricketer in the world..."



STUDENTS '86

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F A S H I O N

fighter must, when confronted with a wild beast, either kill or be killed. In Bullfighting, each moment is definitive. The loss of innocence, nobility, and power is climaxed by the moment of... truth. KILL! the crowd yells over and over again from its safe seats.

The dedication to a profession in which every moment can be certain death — before which years of training and experience are sometimes worth nothing — may lure only a madman.

Then, to be a Bullfighter, does one truly need to be mad? Is this the condition of the young man who risks everything in a game of life and death played during the best years of his life? That would be denying the Bullfighter all his renunciation and sacrifice. Without that uncontainable eagerness, the dreams of conquerors,



S P A N I S H S T R O L L

photographs by Willem Odendaal represented by bert je oudesluijs amsterdam.

using Polapan ct-135-36 & Polachrome cs-135-36.

modelled by Megan at premier, Christopher at askeys, Davide at z. & Aaron.

make-up by Maggie Baker at faces.

hair by Debbie Dannell-Davies

represented by lynne franks for edmonds salon.

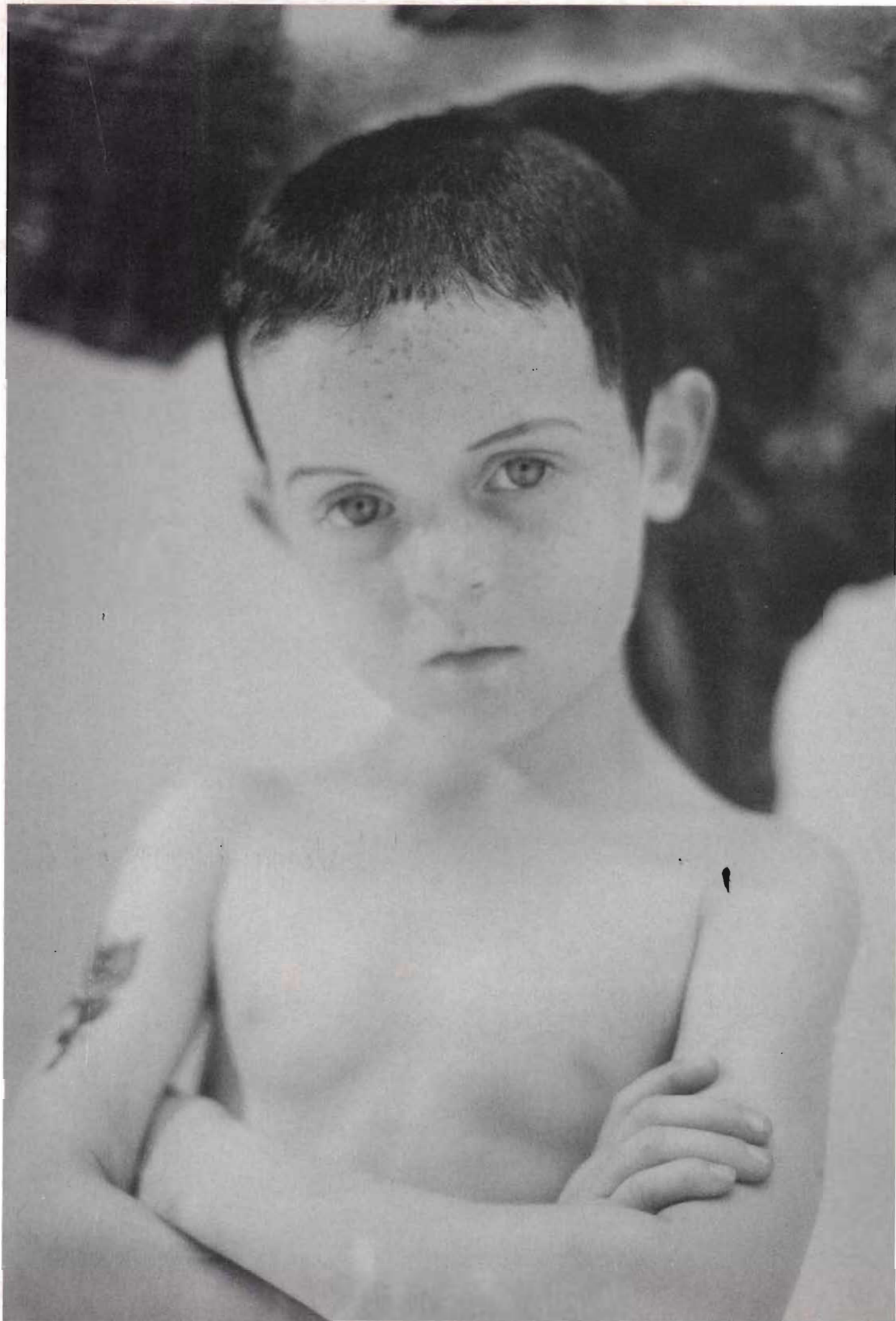
shot at The Worx studios t731-76411.

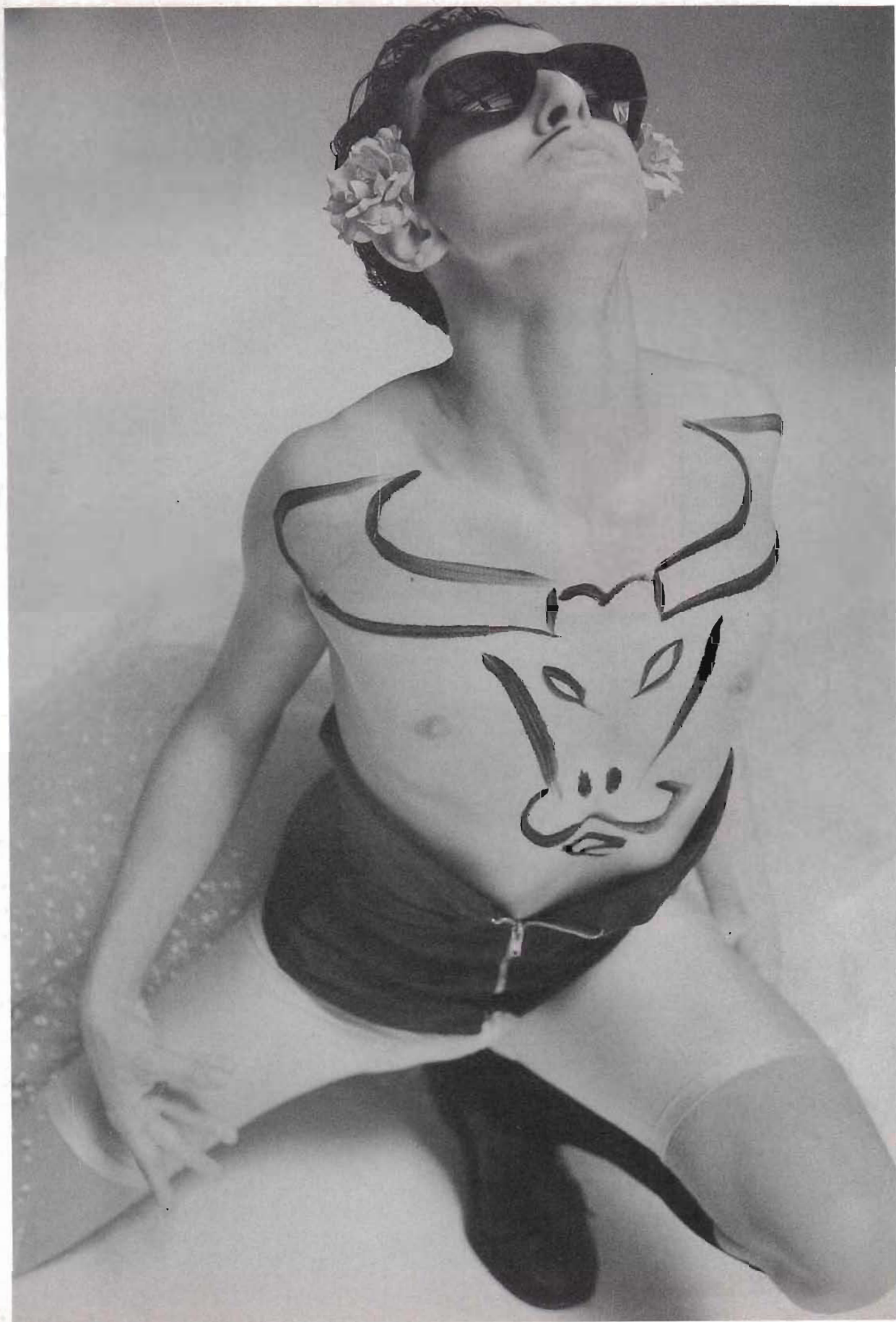
saints, and scientists would be for naught. Over-riding man's prudence and instincts is an eagerness for eternity.

B L I T Z



Moschino t-shirt press freebie.
Corset from **CORNUCOPIA** victoria london sw
Flounced skirt (part of dress) by **DAVID FIELDEN** 137 kings rd sw3.
Velvet bowed shoes by **TREVOR HILL** for **JOHN FLETT** (to order 207-10361).
Dark glasses by **SANCO**.





Racing shorts from **CONDOR CYCLES** gray's inn rd london eel.
Zip front corset by **JOE CASELY HAYFORD** available from jones 71 kings rd sw3.
Red polka dot net dress by **DAVID FIELDEN**.
Sunglasses by **SAMCO**.

Safety pinned shorts realised by **DARRY L BLACK**.

Zip front corset by **JOE CASELY HAYFORD**.

Red tulle skirt by **JASPER CONRAN** 37 beauchamp place london sw3.

Sword kindly loaned by **TONI KINNAN**.



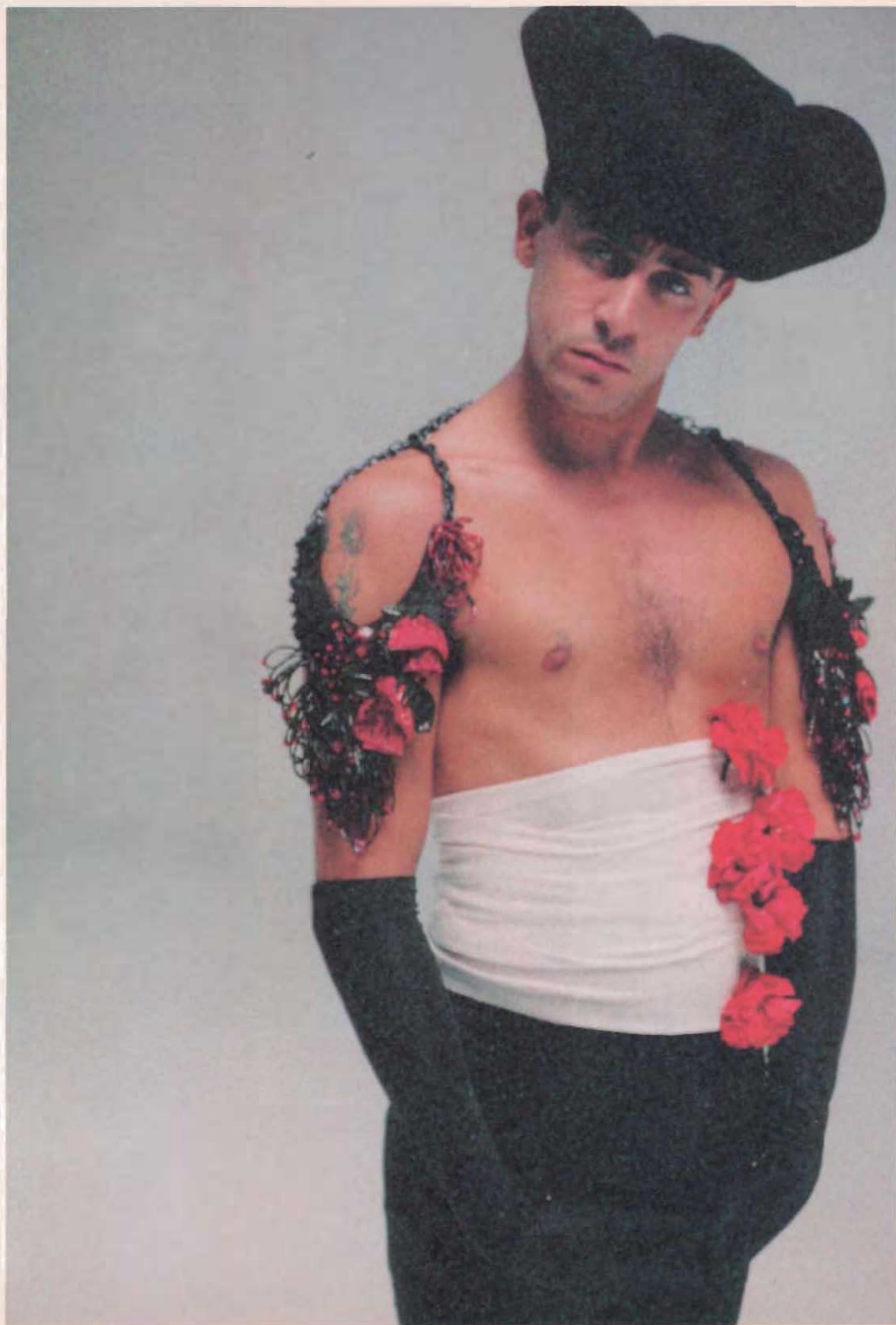


Blue and white striped shirt by **PAUL SMITH** 03-44 Floral or London w2.

White topstitch from **THE CAVERN** carnaby st set.

Red polo neck from **C P DUNN** old conception st w1.

Racing shorts from **CONDOR CYCLES**.
Hat by **NINA RASMUSSEN** for **NEIL BARRETT-HARPER**.
Necklaces (on shoulders) by **EPITAPH** available from eulin swift, 48 manmouth st london w.c.2.
Black gloves by **CORNELIA JAMES**.
Bandages from **BOOTS THE CHEMIST**.

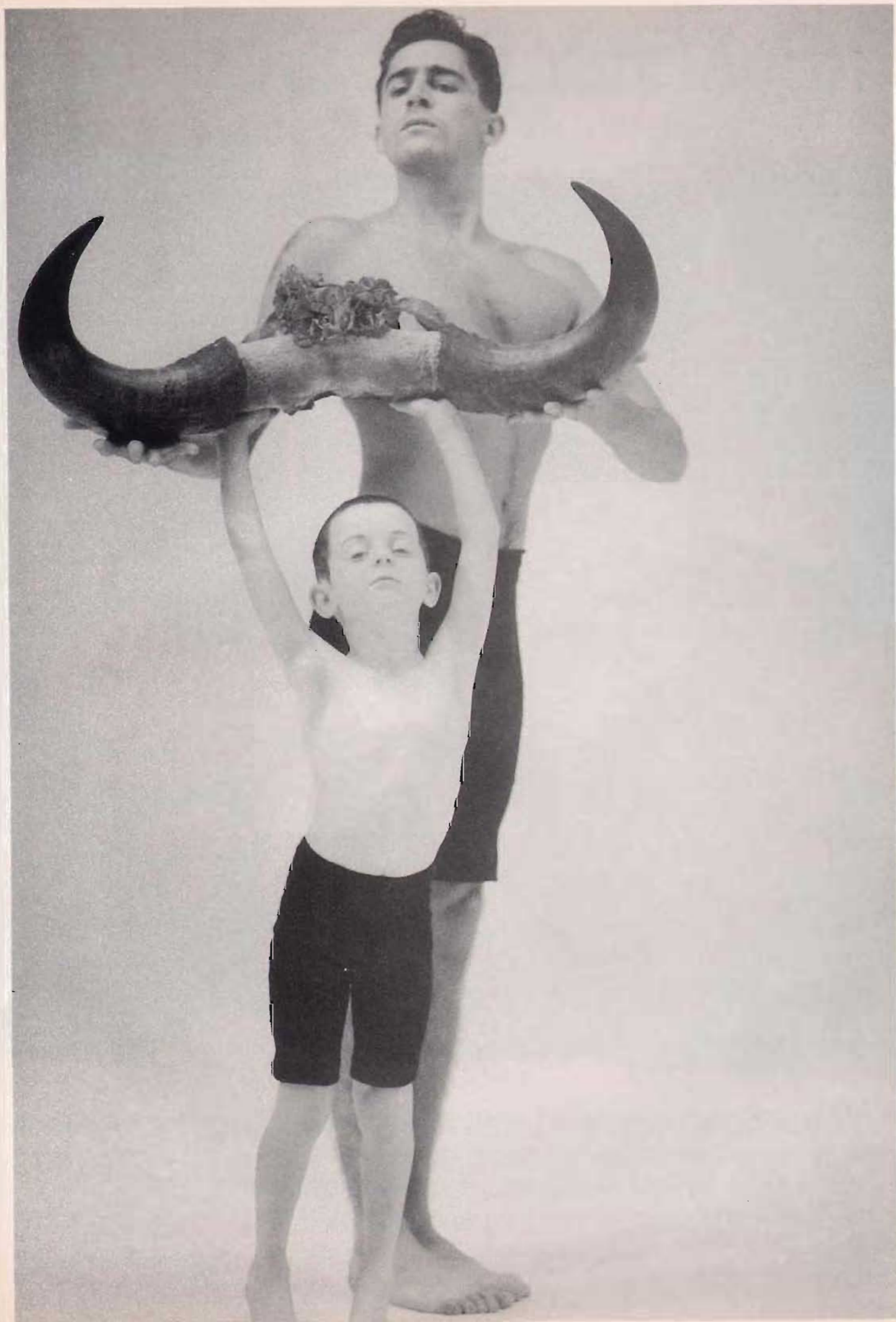




White embroidered shirt by **HARVEY & BANNISTER** available from Jones.
Black trousers by **KATHARINE HAMNETT** 50 south molton st london w1 & 124b kings rd sw3.
Hat by **NINA RASMUSEN** for **NEIL BARRETT-BARBER**.
Black tutu from **PINEAPPLE DANCE CENTRE** (on langley st sw2).
Red tie from **MARKS & SPENCER**.
Shoes by **TREVOR HILL** for **JOHN GALLIANO** (to order 26-7, 1036h).

Sequinned evening gown by **DAVID FIELDEN**.
Net petticoat (as mantilla) by **JASPER CONRAN**.
Scrap fabric (around face) from **ZANDRA RHODES & BERNITTOCK SPIENS**.





Racing shorts from **CONDOR CYCLES**.
Bull horns from **GET STUFFED** (www.getstuffed.nl).

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FROM

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TO

HEARTACHE

In an exclusive interview,

Boy George talks frankly

about drugs, stardom and Fleet Street.

INTERVIEWED BOY GEORGE ON SUNDAY, August 3rd, 1986, at a house in the Surrey countryside where he'd been staying in an attempt to escape from the constant attention of Fleet Street. The previous week George had been fined £250 after admitting possessing heroin. Three days after we met, his friend Michael Rudetski, an American musician with whom he had planned to work, was found dead of a drugs overdose at one of George's London homes. The headline of the Today newspaper asked the question: 'When will it all end?' It's a question George and the rest of the O'Dowd family have been asking themselves for weeks.

George's parents, Gerry and Dina O'Dowd, and his brother David were also at the house. Despite various press reports to the contrary, a nicer and closer family you could not wish to meet. I asked David how they were coping with the pressure. "My mum and dad have put on a very good front," he said, "but underneath they've been battered to fuck, really. It's

not as if there was one exclusive story – it ran and ran and ran and never seemed to go away. Every time I turned on the television or the radio there seemed to be something about it. I started to crack up, 'cos I couldn't handle it after a while. I just thought, 'Christ, this has gone too far...'"

Although he's still undergoing treatment, George was looking healthier than he's looked in a long time. He's put back some of the weight he lost and there's a gleam in his eye again. He seemed, well, just like the old George, rampaging round the house, shouting and screaming, bubbling. He wasn't wearing make-up and had purple goo all over his head because he was re-bleaching his hair.

The previous day, we'd spoken on the phone and

Interview by Tim Hulse.

Photographs and make-up by Paul Gobel.

► he'd agreed to an interview but said he wouldn't talk about drugs, because he was "fed up with apologising." As it turned out, George being George, once we'd started there was no subject, including drugs, that he wasn't willing to talk about, and at length. He talked about the pain of addiction; his hatred of Fleet Street; the police questioning; his disillusion with being a popstar, and more, much more. He made a couple of great jokes and once or twice looked close to tears. The interview lasted one and a quarter hours.

"I didn't really know what it was at first, I thought it was coke. I just took it. And then I just did it again and again and again and again, fucking nonstop. A nightmare."

George first snorted heroin at a Paris nightclub in March, 1985. Later the same evening, as is usually the case with first-time users, he was violently sick.

"Obviously the answer to that should be, 'Wasn't that a bad enough experience to stop you?' But one thing leads to another and you just get caught up in these things. People around me were taking it and I just started taking it, I liked the feeling. Any doctor will tell you, it's a wonderful feeling, it's very numbing, it makes you feel oblivious to everything. I mean, certainly at particular times when things were going wrong it was great. It sounds terrible to say that and it is terrible to say that, but it just numbed me and I didn't care and it was wonderful. For that time. It gives you a false sense of arrogance, it makes you feel superior, it makes you feel like you know something everybody else doesn't, so it was perfect for all those times when I was being ripped to shreds by the media and the records weren't selling. It was a perfect way to hide.

"I suppose I started taking it regularly about eight months ago. I had a really bad habit, up to four grams a week, really heavy. I wasn't going out at all, just staying in and doing it, snorting it, and getting out of my brain. Everybody was so worried about me and I just didn't care. That's the worst thing, I think, about that sort of drug, you just don't give a damn and there's so many things that can happen to you. I could have died so many times. I'm really glad that there are certain people who really do love me. I don't mean, like, 'adore' me, but genuine love. I've got certain friends who do care about me and they really kept on and on at me and if you've got somebody who's prepared to keep on at you, it's a good thing.

"When I was addicted it made me really terrified. The amount of pain I had from being addicted, that's what made me stop, really. I could tell you stories about me and Marilyn just being so ill and saying to each other, 'I never want to feel like this again, ever, ever

again.' We were on a cruise and we were in Kuala Lumpur and we ran out of gear and we just got so ill. It was hideous, because it was the most beautiful cruise and we were going to all these beautiful islands. I really didn't think I'd ever get to the stage of dependency and it was hideous when that happened. I got so scared, 'cos I'd always been so together and suddenly there I was in a situation where I just couldn't get out of bed. I mean, a lot of those stories were true, I just couldn't move, I was like an old man.

"It's ruined so many things for me, heroin, and that's why I hate it now. It's ruined work, friendships, it's just got in my way and done me so much damage, so much. And I wasted so much money. You know, out of your head doing this, doing that, flying here, flying there, being really careless. I was always really careful with my money and I was getting very careless with it - I was very generous to people, you know, so-called friends, liggers. I was taken for a ride by so many people and that's why I feel such a fool.

"There's a lot of sitting around in seedy flats. That's probably why I got caught, because I did it myself, I didn't have drug runners. That's one thing that I'm pleased about - I never used anybody to go and get drugs for me. I never had any lackeys and I never made anyone take risks for me.

"In a way, after I had my treatment I wish I just had not talked about it. I wish I hadn't apologised, I wish I hadn't discussed it, I really do. Although at the end of the day I suppose the people who owe an explanation to are the kids - fans, I mean, that's such a corny line, 'the kids'. They're the people I had to do it for and unfortunately the only way for me to be able to do that is through garbage like Fleet Street and things like TV-am. I've had all the same old questions - 'How can someone as intelligent as you get involved with heroin?' You can't be flippant, it's such a difficult thing. I just came out looking like the poor martyr and the victim. It sounds dreadful, but I had some good times on heroin, but it's not a good drug, so I shouldn't be promoting it. So I went out and said, 'Look! I repent.' I tried so hard to get rid of that goody-goody image and now I've fallen back into that category again by going out and apologising, but there you have it. I suppose at the end of the day if I can stop a couple of young kids becoming heroin addicts, it's a good thing. I mean, if I can stop *anyone* from becoming a heroin addict it's a good thing.

"That's why I even denied it when it was quite obvious that it was true. I just didn't want to have that kind of effect on young kids. I felt really guilty about that, I thought, God, if it gets out it's just going to be so awful, because I *might* be responsible for some little kid dying or something. I do think about things like that, I really do genuinely. I'm 25, I'm an adult. A lot of people might look at me and think, well you aren't very much of an adult if you get involved with heroin, and it is a dangerous thing to do. But I am aware of my responsibilities."

"It was a complete lie. It wasn't true and there's no need for me to tell you it wasn't true if it was, because it's all out now. I could tell you what I've done until I'm blue in the face, I could name every drug and every incident, but that just wasn't true."

On June 10th, 1986, The Mirror ran a front page story in which the photographer David Levine alleged that George had a serious cocaine problem. He described a photo session at which George begged and persuaded him to get him some coke. George maintains the whole thing was a fabrication and was "set up" between Levine and a Fleet Street journalist. According to George's version of events, it was Levine who asked George to get him cocaine rather than the other way around. After being pestered, he finally agreed, although he says it is against his principles to get drugs for other people ("what I do is one thing, but I don't push to other people"). In any case, George says he never takes cocaine.

"It really doesn't agree with me. I have taken it and it makes me very paranoid, I hate it. I'm such a sort of electric person anyway, I'm like a sort of walking fuzzbox, I don't need things like that, uppers. I suppose that's why I got into heroin so much, because it's lethargic, it's the opposite of what I am really as a person.

"When the story broke loose I couldn't believe it. I've done so much to help David Levine, I can't tell you. He called my answerphone after that whole saga and sort of said, 'Hi, it's David Levine' and put the phone down. So I called him and said, 'What are you doing, calling me? What's your excuse?' He just came out with some mumbo jumbo, so I went mad. I said, 'If I ever see you, I'll kill you' and I will if I ever see him, I'll punch him straight in the face, 'cos he deserves it."

"I suppose in the back of my mind I knew the story would come out. I thought it would be somebody from my circle of friends rather than my brother, but there you go."

Throughout the rest of June speculation about George's drug taking continued. Culture Club cancelled their US tour and George appeared at the Clapham Common anti-apartheid concert and referred to himself as "Britain's favourite junkie." In the end Fleet Street got the story they were after, but from the least likely quarter. In a last-ditch effort to stop George taking heroin, his younger brother David rang

up Nick Ferrari at The Sun and handed him the whole story on a plate.

"I said I didn't want no money for it," David told me, "and they were down within fifteen minutes. I made their day, but then again they stabbed me in the back, because they wrote a really cruel article on 'The Dotty O'Dowds'. They wrote this pathetic article saying the whole family's crazy. I mean, you've been here, is there anything crazy about us?"

"You see, the trouble with Fleet Street is that they never had anything to get George on, *never*. He was too good for them. When I gave them the story, they fucking *lapped* it up. Newspapers *die* for things like that. They phoned me up and said, 'Look, are you sure you want to go through with this?' And I just said, 'I've told you all of it now. Even if I said no, you're not going to wipe it off your front page. I know where I stand, just run it.'

"The next night I couldn't get into my house, there were, like, forty people outside. I went two miles down the road to find a phone box and there were ten journalists standing outside it, it was ridiculous. George called me up and he left a really nice message on the answerphone (*laughs*). I think he called me a 'fucking cunt' twenty times and a 'bastard' about ten. I knew he didn't really mean it. He was upset – because it was made public, he could lose a lot of money, he *should* be upset about it – but your health is far more important than that.

"The thing I regret is that the whole family has just been dragged through a pile of shit, all of us. I was the one who gave this newspaper something they dreamed of and they still dragged me through the shit. I'm not saying I was naive about newspapers, I did know what they were all about. I don't even regret that I gave it to The Sun, because they're all the same. Afterwards, The Mirror said, 'You should have given it to us, we'd have done it so sympathetically.' It's bollocks. They all sensationalise everything. Honestly there was about fifteen percent of truth in the whole of it. I didn't put a time limit on George's life, I don't know anything about drugs, all I know is they're not very good for you. But this 'eight weeks to live' – they just pulled that out of the air, how much he was doing a day, all that, it was all crap. But that's newspapers for you."

"I remember opening my windows and seeing TV cameras and just bursting into tears. I went mad."

Once the story was out, the pressure was really on. George ran.

"Outside my house there was like four TV cameras, lights and *thousands* of press and I just thought, my God, what's happened? I just *freaked*. It was like a nightmare, it was really horrible. I had to climb out of

the back of the house and just *run*. I ran away and found somewhere to hide and just hid for days.

"I suppose I just thought, God, everyone's going to hate me. Because heroin is such a *dirty* drug, it's such a filthy drug. It's not like cocaine, that's quite glamorous to a lot of people. You know, it's alright for rock stars to take cocaine, everyone does it, apparently – I must be one of the few that don't – but heroin is such a bad drug and so I just thought people would hate me. But the response has been great, people have been really nice and I suppose I wasn't expecting that.

"Some of the letters I've had, they're *really* sweet, kids of seven years old saying, 'I love you, please don't kill yourself'. You just think, God almighty. I just get so shocked by it, you know, how much of an affect you have on people, it's frightening, it really is. I was in the middle of my treatment and I got this pile of letters and I just cried and cried and cried. It sounds like Lassie or something, but it was *awful*. I just thought, oh no, these people are so fucking kind, I don't fucking *deserve* people like this. One girl turned up at court with £16,000 in her bag to bail me out. I looked at her and I said, 'You're *crazy*, you *mustn't* do things like that.'"

"The police were just police. What can I say?"

On July 12th, George went of his own volition to Harrow police station, where he was questioned and charged with possessing heroin.

"They took away my braces, my belt, my shoelaces and threw me in a cell. I was halfway through my treatment and I was very ill and I just cried. I felt so guilty in that police cell. I just kept thinking, God, so many people must have had their heads kicked in in this cell, and there was I eating breakfast minus shoelaces and belt and braces, it was just such a contradiction. It was like, 'What's going on? Why am I in the cell? Why are they giving me breakfast? What are they trying to do?' I mean, that's their game – confusion. They just confuse you and then they ask you questions and try and trick you. 'So when did you see Marilyn freebasing?' And you know damn well you never said that. They try and catch you out.

"I mean, they were asking me questions about Marilyn. I just thought, what the *fuck's* this got to do with me? 'Does Marilyn take cocaine?' I said, 'I couldn't give a shit if Marilyn sticks chandeliers up his arse, don't ask *me* questions about Marilyn.' But apparently Marilyn had told them things about me that they didn't *wanna know*, they couldn't shut him up. You know, he was telling them about my sex life. But I can't hate Marilyn and I won't. Everyone I know, my mother, my closest friends, they all say to me I'm mad, but I love the guy. I really do love him and I can't hate him and I'm not going to. I mean, this is the worst thing he's ever done, I think, he was going to give evidence against me.

"I *had* to give evidence, 'cos everyone had given evidence against *me*. *Everyone*. All my good friends had spilled the beans. *None* of them wasted any time in telling everything, so there was no point in me going along lying. You see, that's the thing, I could have wasted a lot of time. I'm *not* guilty, I was never caught in possession, *ever*. Never would I be that stupid. And I *didn't* want to convict dealers. The two dealers that I used to get my gear off were busted and I did not want to give evidence against them. I just thought I was responsible, not them. It wasn't their fault I took heroin. I thought they were my friends. But one thing you learn is that no dealer is a friend. They're all scum. I mean, they went in and the first thing they did was they said the most disgusting things about me, I mean, immediately. They didn't keep their mouths shut at all. I know, I read their statements. They said I was running an international drugs ring and that my money was being used to sell drugs around the world, so it was a case of me or them.

"I could have easily said not guilty, because if they can charge people with possession when they never found me with anything, they can go to any clinic in England and pull every addict out and say, 'Right, you're charged with possession,' it's stupid."

"When my brother Kevin wasn't granted bail, the press came running out of the court, cheering, they were so happy. 'No bail! No bail!' They were like a bunch of kids, they really enjoyed it. They are vultures, there's no two ways about it."

On July 29th, George was fined £250 amid protests that the sentence was too lenient.

"For a month before my hearing I just felt obliterated, everything was just horrible. I wasn't treated like a normal person, of course not, I'm Boy George, but my family went through hell. I suppose in a way the judge was just saying, 'I'm treating you as a normal person today, I will treat you as I would treat any other heroin addict and not as if you were Boy George.'

"Fleet Street did their best to get me convicted. There's so much hypocrisy about drugs. I'm telling you, I was at a smack dealer's once and there was a guy from The Sun there. I freaked. He said, 'I'm from The Sun,' and I thought, oh no, this is a story. And he was buying smack! I mean, I won't mention his name, but the cheek they have to scorn me and yet they don't even know when one of their own reporters is doing gear.

"I'm such an optimist, I'm a *fool* in a lot of ways. When all this stuff was going on, I *kept* on opening my bloody door to Fleet Street journalists just thinking *one* ►

► of them has got to be nice. But *none* of them are nice, they're all fucking bastards, they really are. That sounds like I'm categorising, but I've yet to see otherwise. I mean, I've been so good to them, so hospitable, even when they've come and asked me *disgusting* questions and they've been rude about my family. That's why I was so upset with David. He was worried about me, he thought I was killing myself, fair enough. The only reason I'm annoyed with him is because it gave those bastards an opportunity to interfere with *my* family, and really at the end of the day they're all I've got – they're my people, my family and it's *personal*.

"I hate the idea of my family being involved in my work, it's a separate thing. I love my parents, I really do. They're very special, my mother especially. It was so heartrending the things she said to me, you know, she said, 'I'll die before I let you die', things like that. Even thinking about it makes me shudder. She really meant it. She kept turning up at my house, she was crying all the time and just saying, 'Please, please stop.'"

"I became the boy next door, a sort of potato print of the Queen Mother. You know, I'd just become this sort of thing. And I as a person ceased to exist. 'Boy George' was just somebody else that other people had ideas about and expectations of and I just had nothing to do with it, I went along with it."

Waiting for George to turn up, I'd watched a video compiled during the Culture Club tour of Australia a couple of years back. It was quite nostalgic. There was George being interviewed on every chat show and pop show imaginable and those same old questions kept being asked, 'Why do you wear women's clothes?' and stuff like that. George was grinning away and quite clearly loving it all. But that was the old Boy George, Boy George the Popstar. The new Boy George is something of a realist.

"I suppose I'm ruder now. There was a period when I played the role 24 hours a day and I wouldn't be rude to anyone for fear of losing a record sale. Well I got to the stage where I just thought, 'I can't stick it any more, fuck it, 43p down the drain, I don't give a damn.' It sounds like I'm being selfish and it sounds like I don't care. I *do* care, but I suddenly realised that I was putting a *lot* more effort into it than other people were. For instance, the rest of the band or even the fans.

"There was a period when I actually *believed* that certain kids belonged to me. I was so gullible, I really believed they were my little clan and that I owed them

something and that it was special and that I was more important to them than anything, and I wasn't. There was a group of about twelve girls who used to sit outside my house and I got so involved with those kids that in the end it was almost as if I was a fan of *them*, it was like a role reversal and it started to get really weird. And then they suddenly went off me and I was *so* upset. I thought, God, what are you doing here, you can't *get* that involved with people. I think then the whole realisation of the fraud of pop dawned on me. I just got disillusioned. I really *believed* it, I used to sit in writing letters to kids, I was *so* dedicated to being a popstar, and, I mean, I was a really good one.

"There were certain elements of the whole thing that were just totally fraud, *fake*. It was gradually dawning on me all the time and then I suddenly just got really pissed off with it and I thought, well this is it, I'm not putting up with it any more. About three months ago, when *Move Away* went into the charts, loads of fans that had deserted me turned up at the airport and I told them to fuck off. That's how upset I got. I just said, 'Get lost! Where have you been for the last year?' It sounds so petulant, a *real* star would never do something like that (*laughs*), but I just never saw myself as a real star. I've always seen myself as a person with feelings and I always show them.

"I'll never understand why a bloody good record like *God Thank You Woman* didn't get into the charts. I think it's a brilliant record and I'll fuck anybody who says it isn't, I'll fuck 'em all, I don't give a shit. And our album's really brilliant, I don't give a *fuck* what anybody says, I'm *adamant* about that, it's a great album. I put my *heart* into that album and I put a lot of effort into it. I think the problem really with the album was that we didn't tour. I mean, I was well into going out on tour, but obviously with my physical state we couldn't have. I was just fooling myself. 'Let's go out on tour' – smacked out of my head.

"You see, I love music and I love singing and I love playing and what happened to Culture Club is that we just stopped seeing each other on a working level. We stopped rehearsing, we stopped writing together. It all became strategy, you know, schedule, it's so ugly. And that just pissed me off and that's probably why I went off and took loads of drugs and did whatever I fucking felt like doing. It was like being in Genesis and I don't want to be in a band like that.

"There was a point in my career when everything I sang about was true. Like *Victims* was *totally* true and it was about something that was happening to me. But I just stopped doing that and I want to start doing that again, like singing my problems. That's what I'm good at – when I'm singing a song that I mean, that's when it really comes through. I think the best stuff has to have *some* kind of reality, even if it's only what's stuffed down Morten Harket's trousers or whatever. I mean, everybody wants to know what's down there, don't they? I do, certainly.

"I love Prince I'm a *fan* of Prince. I could never devote myself to, like, learning dance routines and getting a whole number worked out for a stage show. I do envy him, he's so good, everybody jumping at the same time, do you know what I mean? I'd love a band of show-offs, and that's the problem with Culture Club, there's one frontman – me – and three wimps. I'm sorry, it sounds like I'm being rude about them but I always say to Jon, 'Please be a star. Show off.' I want them to be in the limelight.

"You see, you have to fight for these things, you *have* to fight. That's the one thing they don't understand, the rest of my band, they don't understand that these things don't get given to you. No one else made me into Boy George, the lovable character, I did. I pushed and I shoved and stepped on a lot of people's toes and *made* myself heard and that's what you've gotta do, otherwise nobody's going to be interested in you.

"I've had some really wonderful times, some really uplifting times. Probably you'll think they're trivial, but for me they're all wonderful experiences. Like playing live, you're singing a slow song with just a piano and everything goes quiet, I get so carried away. I start thinking I'm Billie Holiday. You know, I get elated very easily. I might sound like an awkward, aggravating, stuck-up bastard, but actually at the end of the day I'm very easy to please. So there have been a lot of times in Culture Club when I've had a great time and I'm *still* having a great time, I'm still looking forward to things. There's something about my heroin addiction, maybe it was a good thing in a sense, because now that I'm out of that, I keep saying to myself, God almighty, look what I haven't done. I just think about how much I've lost from it and how much now I can gain if I stay off it and just *persist* and get on with my work."

When we'd finished, George showed me some of the thousands of letters and cards he's received. They weren't all from fans, a lot were from ordinary people who seemed really and truly concerned about him. There was even a telegram from Donny Osmond. You can laugh at me if you want, but it just struck me that if there's one popstar in the whole world who actually deserves this kind of affection, it's George O'Dowd.

We'll end with a joke.

"I've been tempted to make jokes about it all the time, but I can't be flippant. I'd love to turn round to someone from Fleet Street and say, 'Nuns have habits, so why can't I?'"

George is still George.



SECOND TIME AROUND

(IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE)

For the second year running, the Inner London Education Authority presented a show to promote its two major fashion colleges, St Martin's School of Art and the London College of Fashion. Report by Iain R. Webb (St Martin's, 1977-80).

The ILEA Gala Fashion Show provided a chance to glance over a honed-down version of the end of year shows from St Martin's and LCF, which in St Martin's case was indeed a blessing, since previously the necessity of sitting through hour after hour (literally) of plagiarised patterns cut to perfection to see just one or two glimmers of hope had made me debate attending the ILEA show at all.

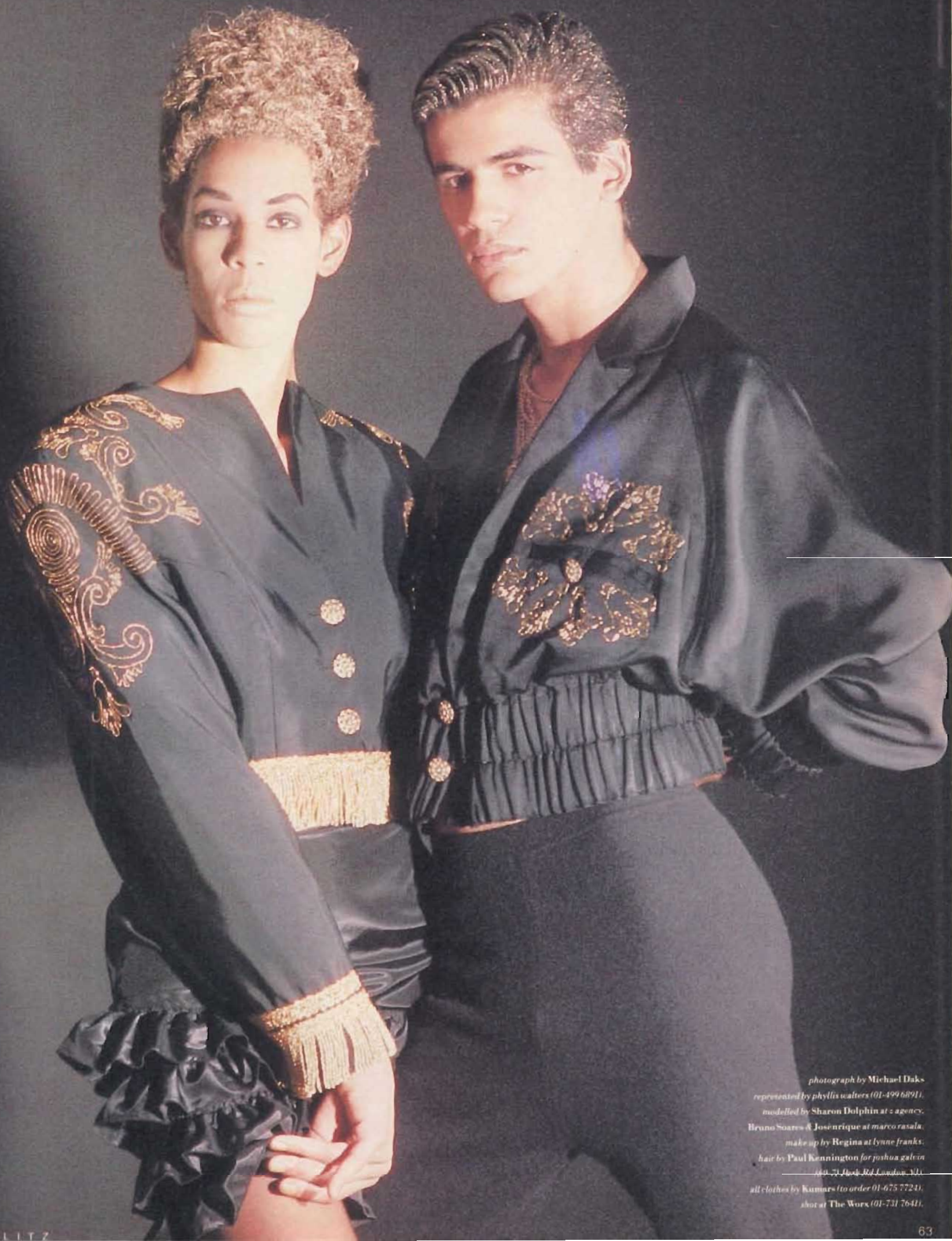
It was good to see old girl Katharine Hamnett playing at Head Girl and explaining why we were all there — to support our home-grown talent and hopefully to persuade the Government to give more money to education. "One successful fashion student could create at least 250 jobs," she said. "If there was more backing, our students wouldn't go abroad. They are trained at the expense of the tax-payer and receive a wonderful education, and then there is more or less no government backing. We are competition directly for British talent against the dollar and the deutschmark." A T-shirt with the slogan 'Education Not Missiles' emphasised the point. "It's an old message, but until it happens, we'll keep running them."

LCF student Kumars, without doubt a rising star, had his own reasons for being glad that ILEA stage the show: "It's good because a lot of people don't seem to bother to attend the LCF show, so they don't get to see our work." His collection of fitted gold embroidered jackets (see these pages) was mixed and matched with flouncy satin frills and full-length organza circles. Titled '20th Century Rococo Baby', the collection left flavour-of-the-month Keenan looking terribly tepid in comparison.

I asked Katharine Hamnett if she thought the colleges are producing the right kind of students. "Yes I do. There is a unique situation in this country in that a formal fashion education is provided ... Yes, I do think they are very good, certainly a lot better than we were in 1969, when I graduated. Very much more mature."

I would tend to differ, if by 'mature' she means being able to synthesize the work of the more influential designers — one cropped Alaïa jacket moved unabated throughout the St Martin's collections, there was a successful 'Richmond/Cornejo' study, a 'Rifat Ozbek' renegade produced 'less is more' without the 'more'... I could go on. I would still prefer to stick with the lady herself, who has most definitely put her personality into practice. Katharine Hamnett is a success because she is Katharine Hamnett. I wonder how many names from the class of '86 we'll be wearing seventeen years from now? ●





photograph by Michael Daks
represented by phyllis walters (01-499 6891)
modelled by Sharon Dolphin at e agency
Bruno Soares & José Enrique at marco rasula
make up by Regina at lynne franks
hair by Paul Kennington for joshua galvin
(40 71 Bush Rd London, UK)
all clothes by Kumars (to order 01-675 7724)
shot at The Work (01-731 7641)

Are Frankie Goes To Hollywood millionaires?

Will Rage Hard repeat the success of

Relax and Two Tribes?

How long before Holly Johnson seeks fresh pastures?

Will he say too much?

Will he say enough?

FROM THE DIAMOND MINE TO THE FACTORY

"It's just one of those phrases, isn't it? Like, OH MY GOD what's that appalling smell? Oh, I think it's Something In The Music Business..."

"I was at this party and I said to this bloke in a High Street suit and briefcase and ridiculous dark glasses, to make conversation, I said, 'So what do you do for a living?' and he said, 'Well, er, like, hey, I'm like, er, something in the music business..."

"I said, 'What do you mean, like a crotchet?'" (John Dowie)

"HIYA, COME IN, SIT DOWN, HOW DO you do, do you want coffee or tea? Sit down. You know, this is the first time I've done an interview at home. We've been here about 18 months, we've just had it done up. The day we exchanged contracts we went off on the world tour so I'm just getting used to it. The neighbours? Oh they're very *ok yah* types but quite nice really. Shall I be mother? Have we started yet?"

Holly Johnson is at home in Parsons Green.

Holly Johnson's coffee cups are modern yellow.

Holly Johnson's voice is sing-song Liverpool camp Frankie Howerd.

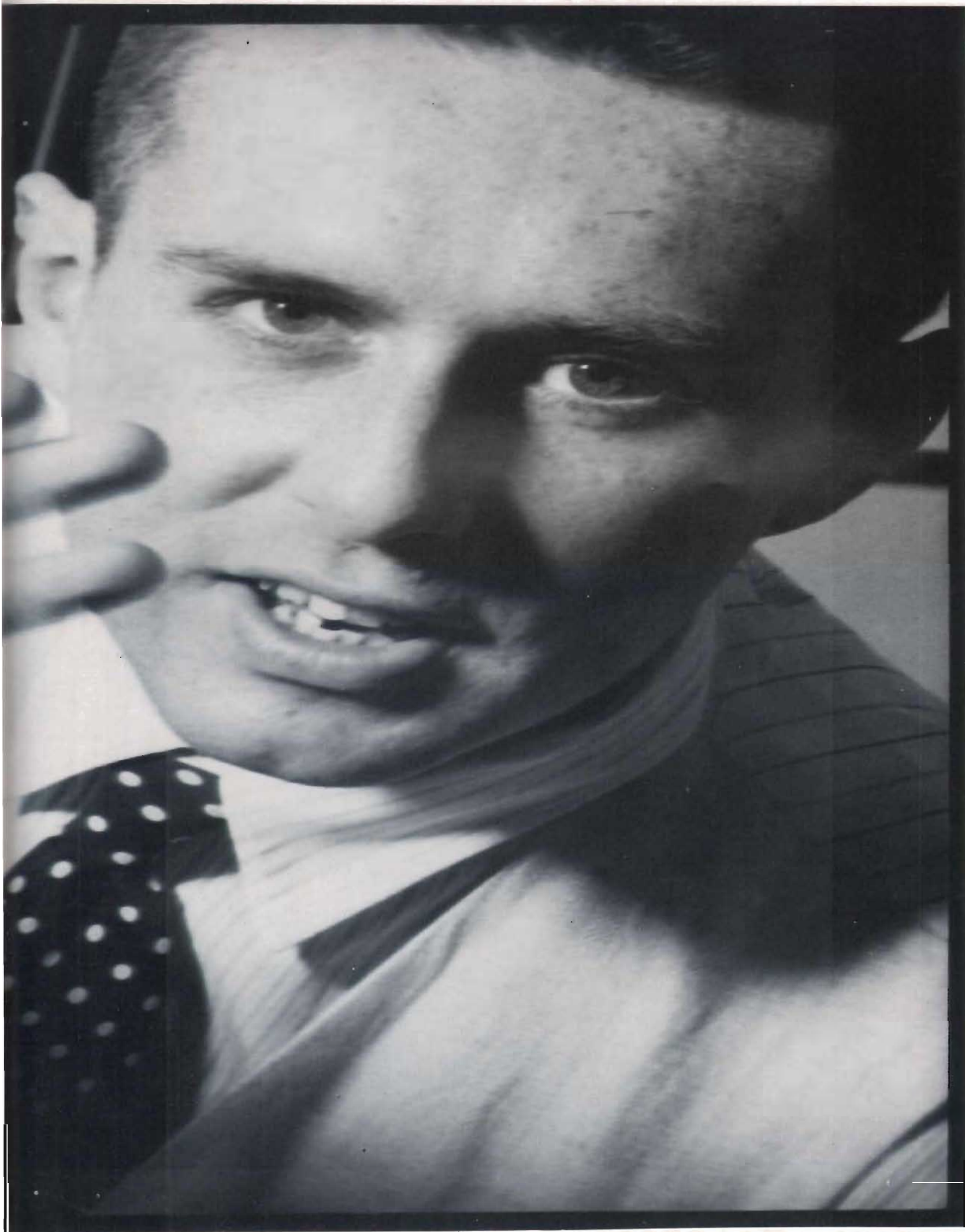
Holly Johnson is entertaining.

"Yeah, I do miss Liverpool, the way it was, my amazing flat in Catherine Street, the way people knock on your door and pop round all the time and you know what everyone's doin', yeah, it's quite touching. Where are you from? Brighton, oooh, *nice*. I still go back but a few of me friends have moved down now and it's not the *same*. I don't feel as comfortable there now. People's reactions have changed slightly. The Merseyside Echo describes us as 'Merseyside Millionaires' which really

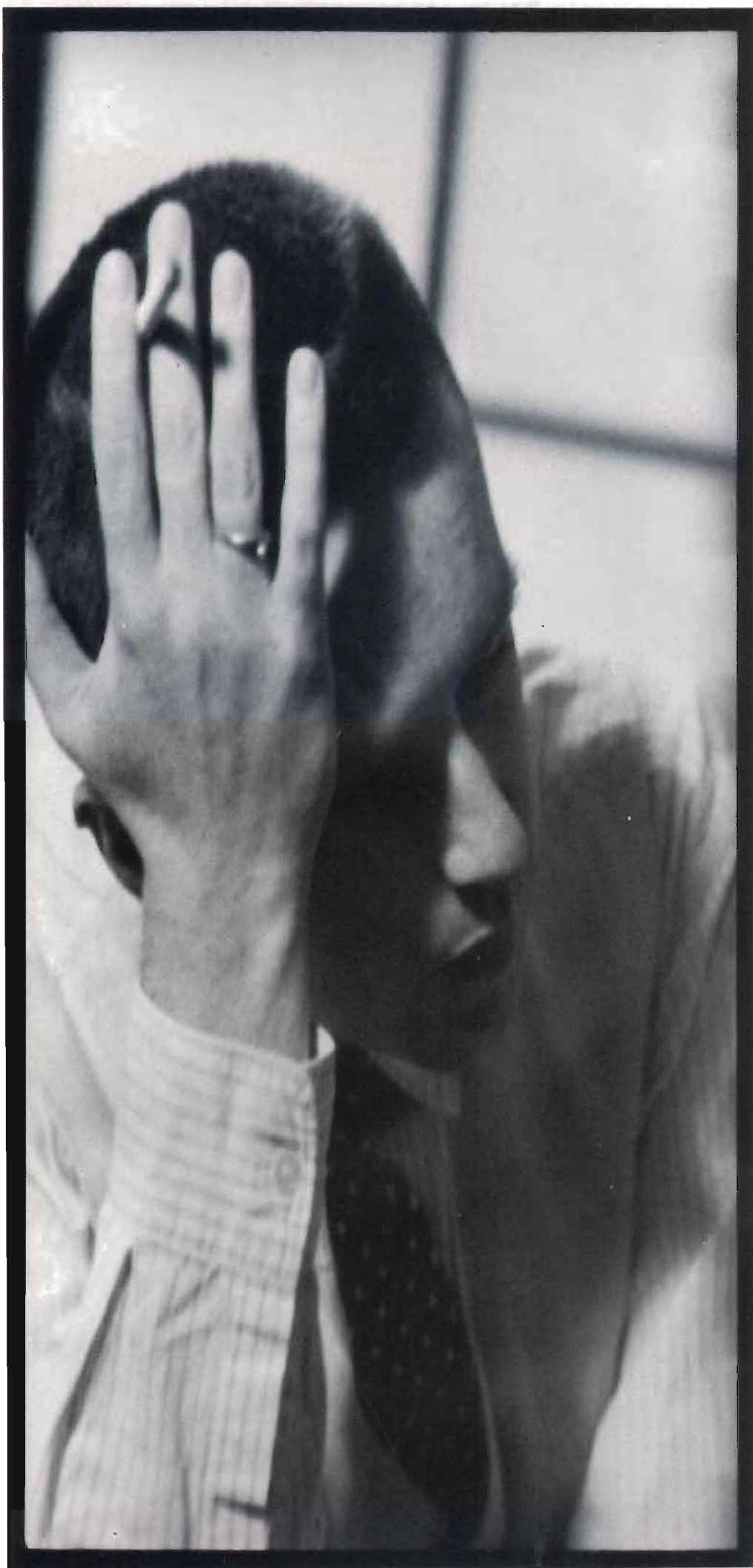
Interview by Jim Shelley

Photographs by Robert Ogilvie





FRANKIE



► isn't the case. Me mum gets *attitude* off people: 'Ooooh your son's a millionaire, worra you workin' for?' People can be weird."

Holly Johnson is at home with the camera click-click-clicking and the tape slowly running.

Holly Johnson is almost entertaining me.

"The album is going to be called *Liverpool* now, yeah, which I didn't really like at first. I wanted it to be called 'From The Diamond Mine To The Factory', which was more artistic, which is my personal, you know, *bent*. I felt that was more relevant, though *Liverpool* is a very strong title. 'E's standing on my sink! You'll slip and break your neck and all for a few photos. Anyway, as far as I'm concerned the album's written and recorded, so to my mind I'm interested in the next project – that's what I'm thinking about and workin' on at the moment, know worrimean?"

Holly Johnson is thinking: I wonder if he knows, I wonder if he'll ask me, what shall I say, will he believe me, what if I say too much, I hope he doesn't make me...

"It's all been a bit of a blur, really, the last two years. From signing on to suddenly being Number One, then signing off the dole and ZTT *kindly* giving us a wage 'cos we couldn't really sign on when we were Number One. No, I never really liked being a Star. You mean, acting the glamorous celebrity, well I can do it, yeah. I did it for a week. No, really I did! It lasted a week. It's terribly fickle, you know, it's so phoney, you're flavour of the week 'cos you're at Number One. I got bored with it. Of course the papers make up all sorts, you ignore it. People ring up and go, 'Ooooh, what's this about *you* in The Sun Today?' I have a laugh with the girls at the grocery store. That's it. To be honest with you, I've enjoyed the lull. We went to Ireland to write some songs and then to Ibiza to do some demos, then back to Ireland, then to Guernsey and we recorded it in Holland. We went there 'cos the studio's good. We couldn't use Sarm 'cos it's too expensive. It was quite nice in Holland, a bit *boring*. The canals were all frozen and children skating on them, it was dead pretty. What else? I wrote a book of poetry and I'm working on the illustrations at the moment. Whether I'll even *try* to get it published I don't know. Nothing ever seems good

enough, do you know what I mean?"

Holly Johnson is pretending to sell me Frankie Goes To Hollywood. I am pretending to be considering buying the idea of Frankie Goes To Hollywood. Holly Johnson is not really interested in Frankie Goes To Hollywood anymore. Neither am I.

"The new music is much less commercial, it isn't as hi-tech, it's more *real* and more *honest*, less synthesised sounds. It's got Trevor Horn down as Executive Producer. It's more rock orientated, which isn't particularly the best direction but it is *a* direction. No-one has a whip-hand, no. I manipulate my own taste onto it, as best I can, but I'm not prepared to have a running battle to have my own way constantly. *I will have my way – when the time comes*. What do I think about it? I think that my input – the lyrics and the melodies – is brilliant. I think I've done really rather well.

Holly Johnson is biding his time, buying time, selling *Rage Hard*, which is a minute too long, a year too late and sounds like ELP, or, indeed, Queen. This seems the only thing worth saying right now.

"The business side is horrible. I employ people to deal with it for me but you can't remain in ignorance. I do understand it all now but it's a horrible learning process. The bands never win because that's the way society is structured: the working classes are never in a good bargaining position.

"Considering that three years ago when we signed a contract I had NO IDEA what I was signing, I had NO IDEA what the first paragraph meant, the education I've had in the last three years in this business has been incredible. I know now, yes, every *infinitesimal* possibility, I have every permutation calculated. See, I got mixed up in this incredible whirlwind of fun, right, and then I thought, hang on, just WHAT EXACTLY IS GOING ON HERE? And as soon as I thought that, the whirlwind of fun ended. All the constant touring, TV, hotels, airports, that horrific tour, I got really depressed, which is really out of character for me 'cos I was always a pretty chirpy sort of person. Right now I'd like to do an album that says ABSOLUTELY NOTHING – politically, artistically. People do it all the

time! I wanna do that. I like calypso rhythms right now, stuff like that. It would be terribly easy for me to slag ZTT. Naivety *did* have a lot to do with it. Obviously Jill Sinclair and Trevor Horn are extremely astute, but not as astute as people might think. They make mistakes too. We made terrible mistakes, *terrible*. I do have great respect for people like Jayne (*Pink Military*), who've got their own label, who do things at their own pace and style, like *What I Wouldn't Give*, which was fab, yeah, and eventually that will happen. My advice to young kids in bands would be DON'T SIGN ANYTHING, hahaha. No, you have to get the most expensive lawyers you can, not one of these run-of-the-mill Music Business lawyers whose name gets bandied about from record company to record company."

Holly Johnson is thinking, 'Well half the people in the music business are saying we're living as tax exiles and half are saying we owe ZTT half a million and I'm tired of what people say'. Holly is right.

"Business and friends don't mix very well, no. It changes your relationships. When there's a business decision to be made, some of you are on one side of the fence, some on the other and some *on* the fence. You don't become a person anymore, you become the ARGUMENT. The Eurythmics seem to have got it right. Dave and Annie, hahaha.

"I don't know how much we've made. I've got a good idea. I've got a few bob but there's no way I could stop working. Put it like this. I don't know any millionaires."

This is a good way of putting it.

Holly Johnson thinks, 'How can I put this, how much should I say, how will it sound, I hope I don't tell him, I wish I could tell him.'

"I love singing and I love writing songs and I'd love to do other things too and I have to carry on in order to reach the next chapter. I think about it all the time. I've had offers to do certain things that I want to do. Like what? Haha. I can't really talk about them (*giggles*), I'm sorry, I can't really talk about them at all. You can't be any vaguer than that!!! Well... I'm interested in film, you know... behind the camera, definitely behind. Paul (*Rutherford*) never discussed his shops with me. You'll have to ask him about that, I read it somewhere but I don't know anything about it... It is a horrid ►

FRANKIE

► business, people outside always say, 'Everyone you meet in the music business is just *disgusting*' and you do constantly meet people you *hate*."

Holly Johnson is doing the dishes.

"I like Alison Moyet (*giggles*) and I met Elvis Costello and he was rather nice too. I'm a bit snobby, actually, mmm. I tend to kind of think of everyone else as sort of POP MUSIC, 'Oh I'm not in *that*' (*giggles*). I met Gene Kelly, he was quite pleasant. I met him at MGM. Oh God, *Body Double!* OH WOW. You shouldn't have mentioned that one, hahahahaha, well, you live and learn... America... God. I liked watching TV in America. I liked San Francisco. I didn't like New York, I didn't like Los Angeles, I didn't like Detroit. It was so *sad*. The whole tour was pretty horrific, really."

Holly Johnson is giggling but probably only because he knows he won't be doing any of THAT again. Holly Johnson is crossing his fingers, holding his breath and hoping he can keep talking, holding out, holding on, not give the game away.

"Well... Has it become a *rock* group... I don't know... I hope that never ever happens. No, I don't think it has happened. Otherwise we would be doing just more of the same and we aren't. I don't think what *I* do is heavy and cumbersome. I think that's what makes it interesting – the taste clash. It's like Roxy Music, for example, a lot of interesting elements. Who've I got on my side? No-one. I don't think what *I* do is routine. It's not empty-headed pop music... I said what I wanted to say and I said it in a way that I don't find embarrassing. The way it's done is important to me, yes. I mean I could never write a line like "Call me good, call me bad/Call me anything you want to baby". I could not write a line like that. That's what matters to me. I do think about the future a lot, yes, about the next thing that's going to happen, yes. I worry about my particular job more than anybody else's, that's what I'm interested in. I'm not interested in what they do so much. I'm interested in what I do. We have had a particularly difficult time, yeah, as a unit, but I've never made any public statements about this, so why are you so certain I'm going to leave? Am I going to? Oh

God. Hahahahahaha."

Holly Johnson thinks this is it. At least he's asked at last, I can stop evading and he can stop hinting, but can I say I wish I could tell him? I hope I don't tell him.

"Put it this way, I never ever want to be in a situation like Queen, who are fabulously successful and very clever and all that, but I'm not interested in this forever pop group. I always said I could only see three albums. As I said, I like the work that I've done on this new record and you have to compromise sometimes and yes it is *really* difficult."

Holly thinks that must be enough, I hope it's enough. I hope it's not too much.

"Why am I putting up with it? You're putting words into my mouth, hahaha. Can't you see my position?! Can't you see you're asking me a ridiculously difficult question and to answer it I'm just going to compromise myself incredibly? It's a very special situation, yeah, incredibly complicated. I don't have to say anything that's going to upset anyone, let's face it. It would be bad for me to do that. Everything is in a very fine balance. I don't want to complicate it any more. It would be good if I could just get on with it, yeah, but things aren't as simple as that. I *could* do it like Sylvian, stay with the label... Isn't that good enough for you, hahaha?"

Holly thinks, 'Let's change the subject'.

"I don't think I've changed that much from the early days, why, what did I used to look like? More extreme? Oh, the leather and that... Well I'm not Brian Ferry now, not by a long chalk, haha. I was more into fashion at that time. I was into, you know, FASHION, hahaha. I'm not interested in fashion anymore, no. I never was in the first place, but I thought I was. I always thought: WOW! I'd love to go into *that* shop and buy *THAT* and then all of a sudden I could, so I did. I did it like hell and then I thought, well that was a bit stupid, wasn't it? Being taken in like that. I do go through a lot of phases, though, yes. When it becomes, like, this season, that season, next season, that's ridiculous."

Holly Johnson is called Holly for dancing to *Walk On The Wild Side*; he is not very wild these days.

"No, not really. I went through my hedonism phase before Frankie broke, really. The others got into it, yeah. I went to this great Brazilian restaurant last night. I bought a nice sideboard, really nice sideboard. Last week I was supposed to go to Venice but I couldn't go 'cos I had no roof. Do you want another cup of coffee?"

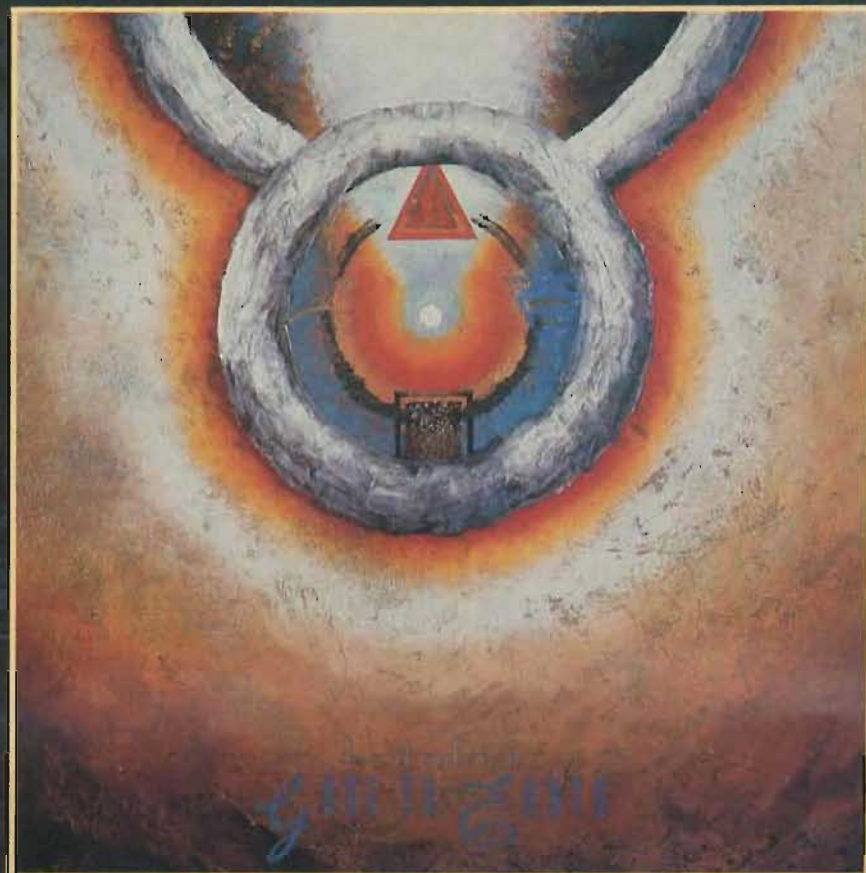
Holly Johnson, slipping away from secrecy, is back being himself now that he's remembered to be more Norman Wisdom than Noel Coward. One day he might like to be Truman Capote though it might end up like Kenneth Williams and sometimes will be a bit Frank Spencer. Never mind: he is entertaining.

"I never wanted to be David Cassidy like you, no. I wanted to be David Bowie for a bit. The bit between Ziggy and Baal... quite a big bit... hahahahaha. He is very good, though. *Modern Love* was great, too. The words were great. I've never met him, no. I had the opportunity to meet him a couple of weeks ago, I knew where he was going to be on a certain day at a certain time and I knew for a month in advance. I had a great time thinking, 'I'm going to meet David Bowie and what shall I *wear* and what shall I *say*' and when it came to the crunch I thought, 'Nahhh. Nahhhhhh'"

Holly Johnson is thinking, 'Well at least I didn't say very much? At least I didn't say anything I shouldn't have. He is thinking it wasn't too bad at all, really. Holly Johnson is dead soft, really, not at all conceited or spoilt, not really at all obnoxious or ridiculously pleased with himself. Not at all like something in the music business.

"Hey yeah, I met Andy Warhol. *Andy*, hahaha. I kept wanting to say, 'Hey, Andy, give us that painting' (*giggles*). That's a Warhol print on the wall there, yeah. Do you wanna see me painting room downstairs in the basement? That Warhol exhibition's useless, isn't it? Who's Don Watson?"

Holly Johnson is a quaver in the music business.



≈
*G*ONE TO *E*ARTH

▲
A NEW ALBUM BY
david sylvian

■
Released 1st September

Double Album VDLI Double Play Cassette TCVDLI

*68 minute single compact disc featuring 13 tracks
available from end of september CDVDLI*



D E R

*Why West Germany's most notorious terrorist group is back in the headlines
nearly a decade after the deaths of its founding members.*



POPPER/OTO

B A A D E R - M E I N H O F K O M P L E X



MOGADISHU, SOMALIA, 18th OCTOBER, 1977, in the early hours of the morning. Four groups of men in camouflage uniform inch their way silently in the darkness towards the Lufthansa Boeing 737. The aircraft was hijacked five days previously while on a routine flight bringing holidaymakers back from Majorca. Negotiations for the passengers' release made no progress as the plane's course wandered across the Mediterranean and in Aden the Captain,

Report by David Marsh.

Jürgen Schumann, was shot and thrown out of the aircraft. Now other measures are being put into action.

At 2.05am local time, stun grenades explode in front of the cockpit windows of the hijacked Boeing. Before the shock waves settle, the four groups of attackers, members of the special unit GSG 9, the German SAS, blow open the doors at the front, back and above the wings of the aircraft. With their faces blackened they storm into the cabin firing blank cartridges and shouting to the passengers in German to keep their heads down. Then they start firing live ammunition. Three of the four hijackers die in the next few minutes,

one in the cockpit, one in the cabin and one cornered in the toilet. A plastic explosive charge goes off without causing serious injury. The passengers are rushed out of the aircraft via the escape chutes and at 2.12am the message is flashed back to Bonn: mission accomplished. Seven minutes have passed.

Back in Germany things are also going quietly bump in the night. At 0.38am German time, within half an hour of the events in Mogadishu taking place, a report of the successful GSG 9 operation is broadcast on German radio. In the high security prison at Stuttgart-Stammheim the prisoners were locked in their cells ►



ANDREAS BAADER:
"VAIN, DOMINEERING TYRANT"



ULRIKE MEINHOF:
"BRILLIANT COLUMNIST"



GUDRUN ENNSLIN:
"STALIN IN BLONDE"



JAN-CARL RASPE:
"LOYAL LIEUTENANT"

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY POPPERGOTO

► long before midnight and there have been no disturbances to be reported.

Seven hours later, at 7.41am, the guards with the breakfast trolley (grey bread, a boiled egg and coffee) unlock the door to prisoner Jan-Carl Raspe's cell. He has a gun in his hand and a bullet in his head. In two other cells Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ennslin are also found wounded. All three die later that day; all three had been members of the Baader-Meinhof Gang, also known as the Red Army Faction; and all three had been the ransom for the release of the hijacked Boeing in Mogadishu.

Two birds were killed on that night and whether it was by one stone is the question that has been asked ever since. The answers to the who's and how's and why's have never been found and consequently on the 18th October, 1977, the Baader-Meinhof Gang entered the realm of myth. One's version of the events of that fateful night has become analogous to one's political opinions: suicide on the right and murder on the left. And never the twain shall meet, for in this case history has become identical with the ideology that tells it.

Behind those three letters R. A. F. that so mockingly imitate the British Royal Air Force, there is a long tale. It is one that goes back beyond the era of punk T-shirts and indeed begins in the sixties among students in revolt, mass demos and long-haired intellectuals. These are the people who, twenty years later, have firmly arrived as a lucrative media market. It is time for their story to be told.

The self-appointed historian to Germany's hippie-to-yuppie generation is called Stefan Aust and 1986 was greeted by his veritable blitzkrieg on the media with a book, a play and a film on the subject. The book, *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex*, tells the whole story behind the story in a gripping style to rival Jeffrey Archer and in extensive detail (for example, where Baader stole his shirts from). The play and the film, on the other hand, are essentially condensed treatments of the trial, and the latter — screenplay by Aust, directed by Reinhard Hauff — won the Golden Bear at this year's Berlin Film Festival.

By the standards of today's high-class international terrorists, the Baader-Meinhof Gang were small-time amateurs — and worse, idealists. But for a time at the beginning of the seventies, their career as Germany's Public Enemy Number One was short, glorious and romantically envied by many of those standing on the sidelines.

Their roots are to be found in the student movement of the late sixties, when the idealism of a younger generation clashed with the double standards of their elders, who in a democratic framework maintained a good deal of continuity with the Third Reich. There was enough to protest about: Vietnam; the Shah of Iran; sexism, prejudice and racism; not to mention the tyrannical conditions within the universities. Berlin began to rival Paris for the scale of its demonstrations and the violence with which they were put down. The names of Benno Ohnesorg, killed on a demonstration, and Rudi Dutschka, shot and wounded by a right-wing extremist, entered the canons of left-wing mythology. By the end of the decade, however, the protest movement against the hypocrisy of western democracy had come to a standstill against the water guns and riot shields of the police.

The 'scene' split. One group chose to take the "long march through the institutions", adhering to non-violence and democratic procedure. Today they sit uncomfortably and conspicuously in Parliament — not least because of their long hair and hand-knitted jumpers.

The others found their inspiration in the freedom fighters of the Third World and became urban guerrillas. For Andreas Baader and the people around him, violence became the only logical continuation of the struggle against such a state. The motto those days read: "It is more moral to burn down a department store than to own one." With such thoughts in mind, Baader and Gudrun Ennslin planted fire bombs in two Frankfurt department stores. The step into illegality

was taken.

Their first taste of life on the run was short. They were arrested the next day. Thus far it was a case of mere political extremism and a few burnt bras in the ladies' lingerie department. Baader, and now Ulrike Meinhof, were about to teach the world different.

Ulrike Meinhof was known as a brilliant columnist and Editor of the political magazine *Konkret*. The upheavals of the late sixties had called upon her energies and the biting brilliance of her pen. She had begun to work more for what she believed in than for her career and in 1970 she was to be found writing a book with Baader in Berlin. The prison inmate was escorted out regularly to meet Meinhof in an institute library to do their research. On 14th May, 1970, shots rang out, Baader leapt out of the window, Meinhof jumped after him and both became fugitives from the law. Georg Linke, a 62 year-old institute employee, was left bleeding on the floor, a bullet lodged dangerously in his liver. The Baader-Meinhof Gang was born and the state suddenly began to take them more than seriously.

The "two years of terror" nowadays seems an exaggeration compared to the effort that went into catching them. The highpoint of their careers as urban guerrillas were two bombings of US military installations. There were deaths. They were murderers.

Although life on the run was tough and stressful they took it seriously, even flying out to Jordan for military training with the PLO, but here it became clear that they were in different leagues. Military discipline was as much an anathema to the Europeans as the liberated Baader-Meinhof women were to the Arabs.

Back in Germany there were a few more bank robberies, more stealing cars, a couple of shoot-outs with the police and endless plotting and organising. In the meantime the national paranoia about Baader-Meinhof made movement for them almost impossible. On June 1st, 1972, Baader and Holger Meins were caught while visiting an arms dump in Frankfurt; the others were all picked up shortly afterwards. The long years of imprisonment had begun.

Holger Meins was the first member of the group to die. For over two years they fought for recognition as political prisoners and the right to be kept locked up together. On one of the hunger strikes organised for this purpose, Meins went all the way. Only four made it to the trial.

Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof, Gudrun Ennslin and Jan-Carl Raspe all came from respectable middle-class backgrounds, even though the war had cost the lives of some of their parents along the way.

Baader, born in 1943, spent a wild youth. His rebellious intelligence led to dropping out of art school for a fast life of stolen motorbikes and punch-ups in fashionable Munich bars. Later an expert car thief, he never possessed a driving licence in his life. His favourite clothes were tight satin trousers and silk shirts, even while on exercise with the PLO. According to Aust's book, Baader was a vain, domineering tyrant. The author's sympathies lie more with the intellectual of the group, Ulrike Meinhof. Older than the others, she was an orphan and a gifted and religious student before later developing into a political journalist.

Gudrun Ennslin, born 1940, was the daughter of a protestant pastor, inheriting his critical and moral view of the world. She was with Baader from the start and later became the ideological hardliner of the group, Stalin in blonde, apparently responsible for the isolation and early suicide (1976) of the 'bourgeois' Meinhof. Jan-Carl Raspe came originally from East Berlin but came west when the wall was built. He joined the group in 1970 and played the role of the loyal lieutenant, Little John to Baader's Robin Hood.

The trial began on 21st May, 1975, in a converted gymnasium attached to the prison in Stammheim. It lasted for 192 days. The presiding judge, Dr. Prinzing, was concerned to try Baader, Meinhof, Ennslin and Raspe for their criminal deeds — murder and bombing. The defendants were concerned to show the political

nature of their acts and also the trial. The outcome was clear for both sides from the start but the drama consisted in what lengths a democratic state was prepared to go to uphold what it believed to be democracy. Before it ended, Ulrike Meinhof had committed suicide, and the remaining three were finally sentenced to life-long imprisonment.

According to Stefan Aust: "After studying the trial records while researching my book, I have come to the conclusion that everything that can be said about terrorism has been directly or indirectly said in or through this trial. What took place in the courtroom, like on a stage, has the quality of a parable, the conflict of a clash between the state and its severest opponents, the confrontation of the state with a group who want to transform this state with revolutionary violence."

This is the summary of the film *Stammheim*: history as drama. The outcome is clear from the start; indeed the discovery of the bodies in October, 1977, is the first scene. The interminable legal process which stretched out over months is transformed into a classical drama of suspense and conflict in 107 minutes.

The issue at stake was the particular German form of democracy. Bearing in mind the weaknesses of the pre-Hitler Weimar Republic, the post-war constitution was designed to strengthen the centre. Consequently it has problems with freedom of expression at the ends of the political spectrum, and active support for 'democracy' is a prerequisite for public service — in other words, no Trot teachers nor Marxist-Leninist postmen. It could be described as enforced centralism, or as Goering would have put it, "We have ways of making you democratic. . ."

It was recently revealed that in the late seventies the police blew a hole in a prison wall to get an undercover 'prisoner' out and into the R.A.F. It is the task of the state to prove that its explosions are different from other people's — even though holes in prison walls look pretty much the same. With the R.A.F. the state had to show that there was a difference between a terrorist and a soldier or a policeman. Baader-Meinhof were out to show that there was no difference. They were at war with the state and they considered themselves to be prisoners-of-war and freedom fighters against a fascist government. It was their intention to provoke and they succeeded. In order to nab the Baader-Meinhof Gang West Germany introduced the most draconian legislation it could get away with without having to call itself a dictatorship. Gudrun Ennslin once said, "We can't force those in power to speak the truth but we can force them to lie more and more outrageously."

The wounds made then have still not yet healed.

Aust's wall-to-wall monopolisation of the R.A.F. theme has not made him popular, especially amongst those who would still like to see the Baader-Meinhof Gang as the Sandinistas of Deutschland. Performance of the *Stammheim* play and film were stink-bombed and the copy of the film was even stolen from the cinema before the premiere. But discussion has been provoked in a nation notoriously forgetful of the more embarrassing episodes of its history.

The subject of Baader-Meinhof can never be approached without political emotions being raised. The truth about what happened on that night in Stammheim does not exist — like the crimes of the Baader-Meinhof Gang it is pretty irrelevant. More important is the reaction of the state. As Fassbinder pointed out in *The Third Generation*, terrorists offer a democracy all the excuses needed to adopt those surveillance measures over their citizens that they so envy in police states. It is the fate of those who once in a while care to think a little differently that has been affected most. They have become the losers. The R.A.F. forced the "outrageous lies", but the revolution never came.

On Tuesday, 18th October, 1977, as grenades were brightening up the night sky over Mogadishu, in Stammheim the political ideals were going out with the lights for ever.



10th MAY, 1976. A MAKESHIFT CROSS MADE FROM TOWELS APPEARS IN A CELL WINDOW AT STAMMHEIM PRISON AFTER THE JUSTICE MINISTRY ANNOUNCES THAT ULRIKE MEINHOF HAS BEEN FOUND DEAD AFTER HANGING HERSELF IN HER CELL.



27th OCTOBER, 1977. THE FUNERAL PROCESSION FOR BAADER, ENNSLIN AND RASPE AT STUTTGART'S DORNHALDEN CEMETERY.



BAADER-MEINHOF SUPPORTERS AT THE FUNERAL OF BAADER, ENNSLIN AND RASPE. THE BANNER READS: "GUDRUN, ANDREAS AND JAN WERE TORTURED AND MURDERED AT STAMMHEIM PRISON."



FEDERAL PROSECUTOR GENERAL KURT REBMANN DISPLAYS THE SMITH & WESSON REVOLVER FOUND IN THE CELL OF JAN-CARL RASPE. THE OFFICIAL VERDICT WAS SUICIDE.



N O N U K E S I S G O O D N E W S

photographs by Mark Lewis on polagraph instant 35mm. modelled by Duke & Daniel at z. Hiro at marco rasala. Mark Moore and Christinn.

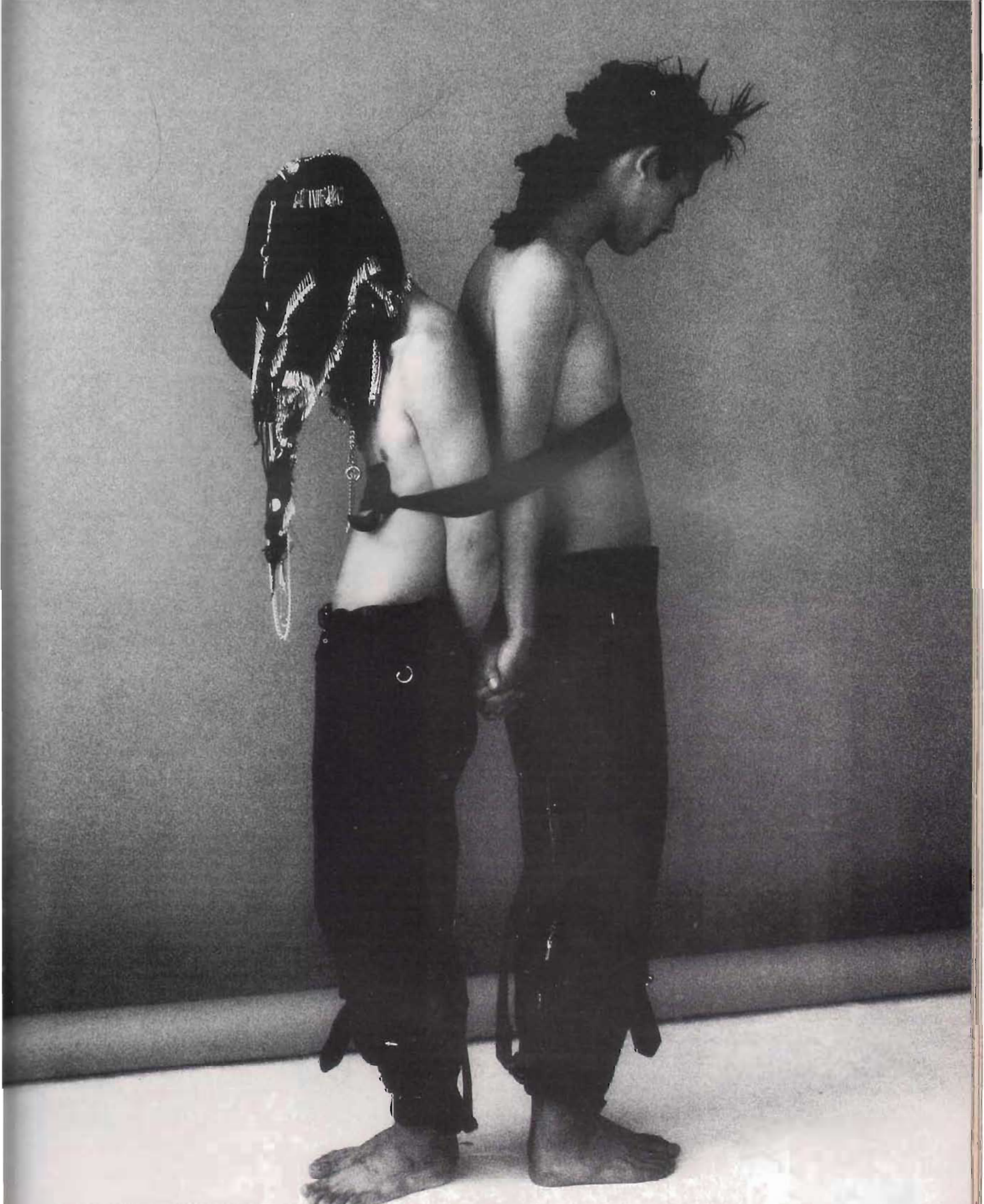
F A S H I O N
N O I H S

B A N I T I



MUSHROOM CLOUD MILLINERY hat by Paul Craig 14 d'arblay st london w1 fabric from John Lewis t-shirt by Comme Des Garçons homme plus 115 fulham rd sw3 belt by Issey Miyamoto 6 slope st sud.



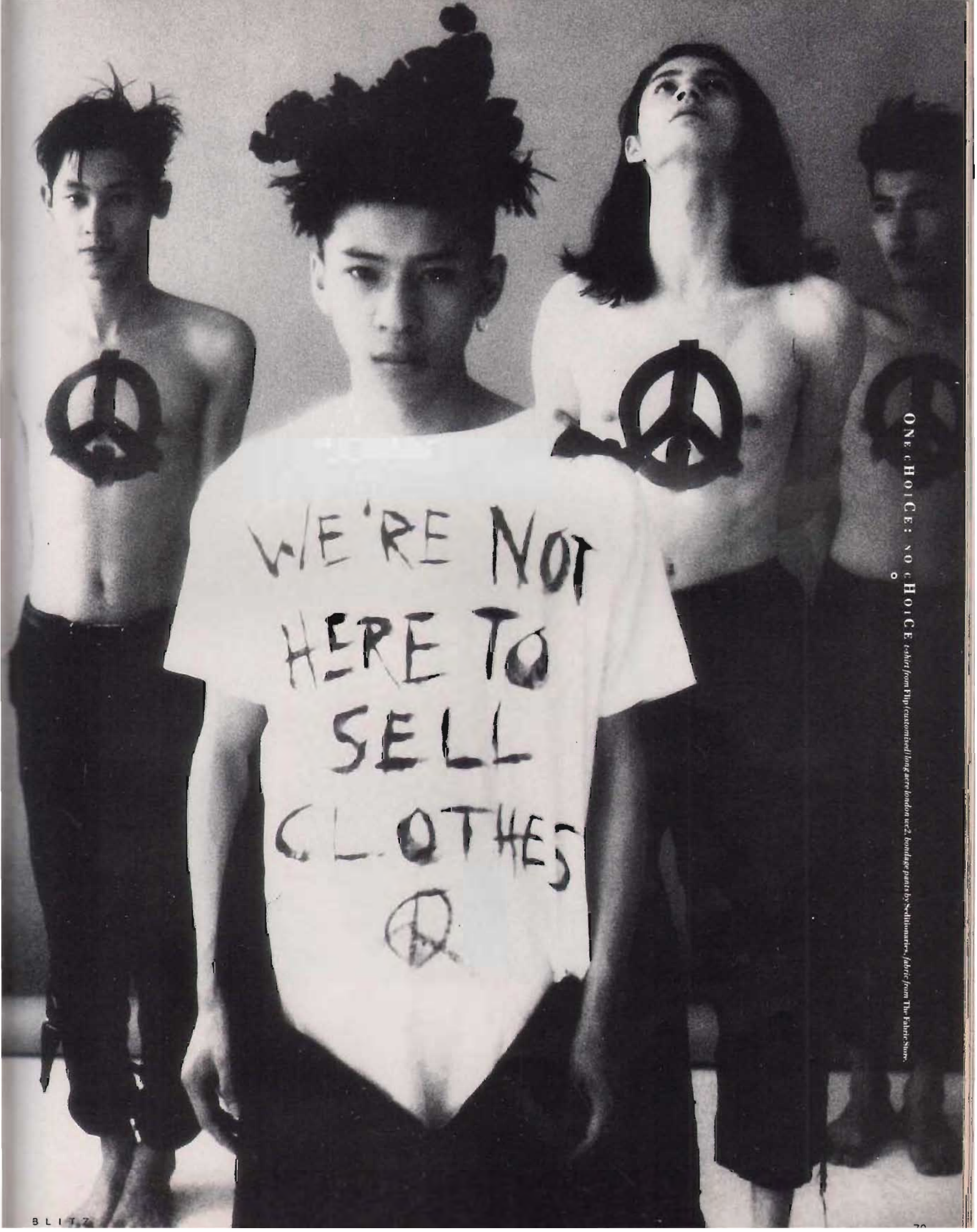


WE ARE ALL VICTIMS *Safety pin scarves by Judy Blume at adult for a basic rough motion it hard on set, bondage transsexuals Seditionaries.*

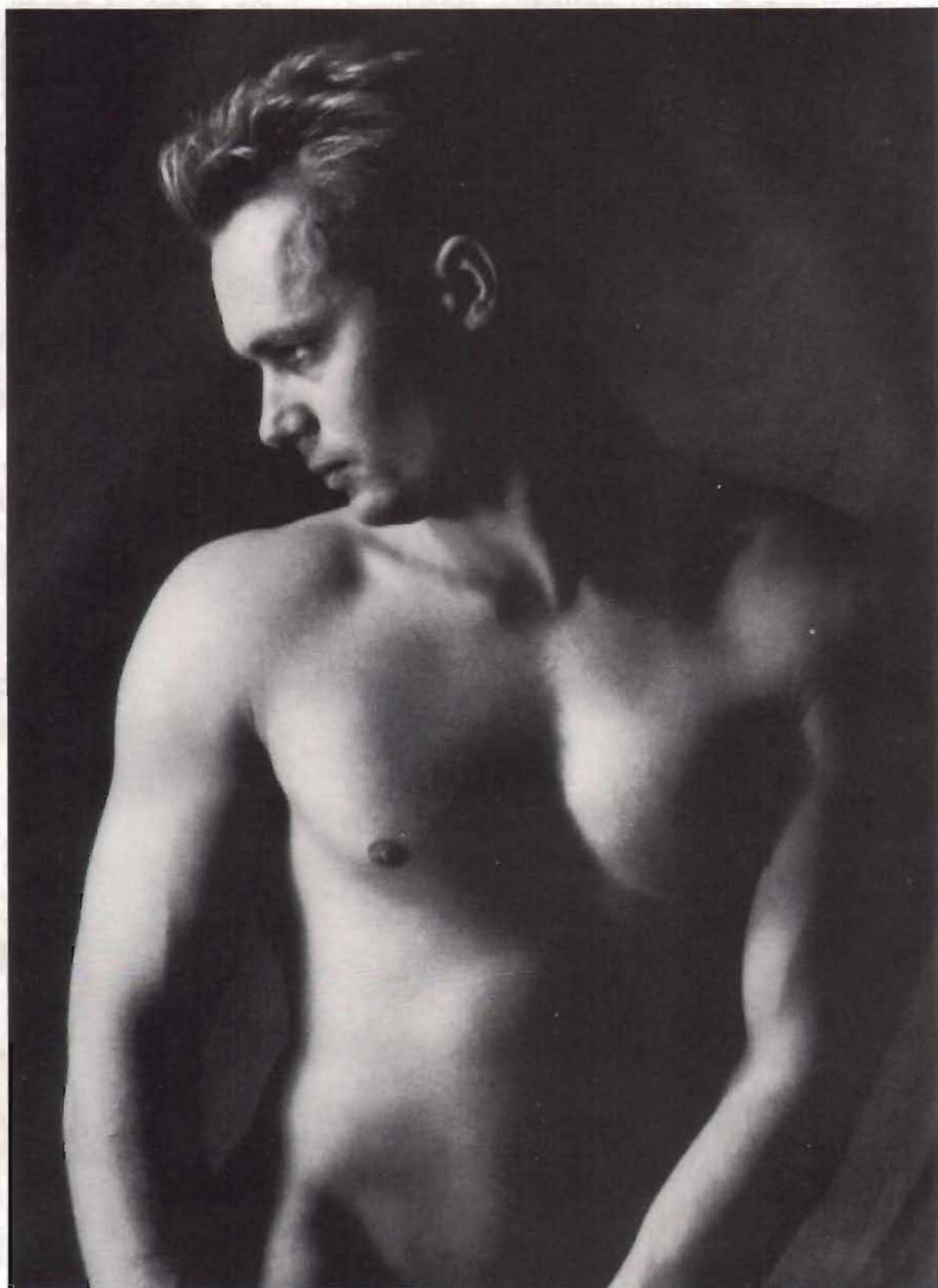
REITZ



STANDING ANKLE HIGH IN INDUSTRIAL WASTE shoes specially created by John Moore-house of beauty and culture 34 stamford rd london e8.



ONE CHOICE: NO CHOICE (shirt from Flip (customised) long sleeve london uk2, bondage pants by Seditionaries, fabric from The Fabric Store.



MAN IN GREY



There is more to Dieter Meier, the conceptual half of Yello, than meets the eye. Former professional gambler, member of the Swiss National Golf Team, expert calligraphist and sometime performance artist, his approach to pop music is idiosyncratic to say the least. An album of Yello remixes is currently available. A new album looms on the horizon.



YELLO & GOLD

BEFORE IT ALL BEGINS, BEFORE THE words and the silences and the dreams spread tantalisingly across the bedroom floor, I sit in the foyer of The Savoy Hotel in silly, styleless London Town, and watch the Royal Wedding. People in black suits and white dresses slump around the Spectacle and weep discreetly. Something about underachieved romanticism. Something small.

After the real fun, after Mr. Dieter Meier and I have shared some Earl Grey tea and some biscuits from Fortnum and Masons, there's questions to be answered.

So what's he like?

"Oh..."

Old?

"42, 24, there's an innocence around."

Is he good looking?

"Perhaps."

Nice clothes?

"Lime green trousers."

But what's he really like?

"Nice. Very nice."

And when you met?

"He asked me to come to bed with him. Really, 'My manager can take the photos', he said. 'I've got lots already. Would that be good?'"

In the lift to the bedroom there's a chair and a mirror. Meier tells me that both are too small and therefore

useless. A man who knows these things.

The room is full of unconscious imperfection, tatty theatrics and stumbly neatness tut-tutting all over the place. We choose our armchairs and throw pretty coloured stones across the table at each other.

Meier is in the country because of a new Yello single called *Goldrush*, featuring Billy McKenzie on backing vocals, and a compilation double LP called *The New Mix In One Go*. Ravishing, reviving pearls of sneaky pop designs, almost mindless dance groove and half a moment past melting surrealist desire. Quite what the record sounds like is, naturally, nothing like the point. It's the act, the way that ephemera affects, which skitters around the room.

Dieter Meier has shuffled up this daft drama with some verve, from the performance art gestures which so intrigue critical pre-pubescent to the calculated beauty of Yello's recorded output. No surprise that on his previous visit, a couple of weeks before, he had taken in the latest Andy Warhol exhibition.

"I like Andy a lot. I think he's the most important American artist. He's more of a historian, totally innovative, not just recycling third-rate philosophical interpretations. He's a tycoon. You can't criticise the weakness of any particular work, because that's not important. It's always a problem when the artist manages to bring forth the impossibility of creation, which has by definition to be a dialectical process of being afraid to put anything in a definite form. That

has to mix with the willingness to make it happen, like building a sculpture out of water.

"It's the sort of thing which only happens once or twice in an artist's life and so it's wrong to criticise, say, an author who has once written a good book, for repeating himself in his other works. The only other alternative is to just give up and go away like Rimbaud or something. It doesn't matter if you go on imitating yourself for the rest of your life, using it to make your money. To have written fifty good pages in your life is enough."

Warhol recognises the absurdity and playfulness of his art in much the same way as Meier.

"Oh yes, Andy has a very Renaissance approach to his work, putting art back in the field of business where it belongs, very openly. The whole creation of the status of nineteenth century art is built on this lie that somewhere there is a genius who creates for himself and then along comes the bad world to snatch away the creations of his heart and put them in the marketplace of business; whereas in reality during the Renaissance the artist was a highly paid, employed character who had to perform. He was a very normal member of society like an architect, a plumber or a carpenter. I think that's far better than this *petit bourgeois* separation of the artist as being a total lunatic or a genius. There's no normal life."

Interview by Paul Mathur.





► Meier was, and indeed still is, An Artist, utilising outside music everything from painting to experimental film-making. Never having to create his art to pay bills he was allowed the freedom of luxury and the disconnection of total indulgence. He started to make films and paint pictures which cost more than he could afford in order to *connect*, to *depend*.

"Basically I wanted to be loved and if someone who doesn't know you wants to show that he loves you, what can he do but give you money?"

Can this desire to be loved, to be connected, ever be satisfied?

"Sure. There's two things: what you do, and the effect it has on the world around you. When people like what I give them, that satisfies me, makes me happy. When I choose the right presents at Christmas, it's good."

Pop manipulates this unattainable desire, but of course so does any worthwhile artistic medium.

"It's ninety-nine percent bullshit, almost totally empty. It's like when you see a very, very good bullfight, which happens very rarely. Having said that, I don't think manipulation is the right word. When it's a masterpiece, like the five good fights a year, it shows you something. It shows the divine aspect of human beings and that inspires you to go on and look for it in yourself. You could call it manipulation but I think that'd be wrong. When I first read writers who gave irony, precision and beauty to their characters, it made me want to try and articulate that myself."

Meier has always created, starting off with a kid's approach and later "fighting to be like a kid again." In between, he was a professional gambler, playing cards for enormous amounts of money.

"It was something I had to do whilst I tried to reconcile my desire to fill blank canvasses, or whatever, with the shabby act of having to do it. You get hooked on drugs or gambling or whatever to take away the pain of standing at the foot of this great mountain and realising just how small you are. So, between the ages of 17 and 23, I was playing poker, any kind of cards, fourteen hours a day, just to be hooked on something. I needed that immediacy to take away the pain of being confronted with having to create something."

And yet you chose the most creative form of gambling, poker.

"I believe so. It's a precise game, like a school. It has all the elements – psychology, strategy, luck. Each hand is like a new life and you can do what you like with it. It's different when you play for fun and when you play because you need to, though."

Were you good?

"I won a lot of money. People used to pay to come and see me. I could make the right jokes, I learned how to establish myself as a total bluffer. If you get this reputation, people who even have only very low cards will follow you to the very end."

Oh, you'll be chewing your pillows with the urgent desire to offload some kind of symbolism on all this, to pretend that this is how Yello pop functions and flutters. Don't try it, or you'll end up with muddy stains all over your clean white sheets. Remember instead that some players need to lose in order to simply *need* again. When Dieter Meier was 17 he played

poker with Marilyn Monroe. I didn't ask who won.

Is bluffing easier in the field of creative art?

"In poker, bluffing is an honest thing, whereas in art it's unhealthy, you just create kitsch. It's like bullfighting again; you go to some parts of Spain and it's all illusion, thriving only on the audience's inability to speculate on what is good and what isn't. The best art always has a hotblooded insecurity to it."

"Time filters the eternal truth and it's only the eternal truth that will remain. Pop is no different from anything else. Most of it is crap but one or two percent is amongst the most beautiful, moving art created this century. If anything, music is far less manipulative because at least it goes straight to some kind of immediate, emotional reaction."

Downstairs, The Wedding drags people onto streets and into some kind of knee-jerk appreciation of unreality. Upstairs I ask Dieter Meier, the man who knows about bullfights and opera and public poker games, if Yello are enough of a spectacle.

"No. For me, I have to live on all these different surfaces, all these different climates. I was thinking as I lay in bed last night, that apart from a few small things, maybe a few visual things, the work of Yello has very rarely found me feeling able to adopt a natural, comfortable walk. I do these kind of Japanese calligraphy drawings sometimes and when I do them I really feel that the totality of my possibilities to make decisions is being used."

"With Yello it's still very dressed up, like a chrysalis fighting to break out. I know when I strum a guitar and sing a song to myself there is more truth and more flying beauty than in what I have achieved with Yello. The breath I give to my work when I do my drawings is very immediate. I do them only on maybe four or five nights a year and I do two hundred or so in a night, very fast, very spontaneous. At times like those I feel the real one-to-one closeness of what I do, whereas on records or films you have your idea and have to carry it through the industrial process."

When Charlie Chaplin made films, he used to hire 150 people to come in every day at 9 o'clock, without fail. If he had an idea he would turn up, if not he would stay at home. An important indulgence?

"I think that's the way I'd really like to work, not just being the donkey following the carrot. I'm working on a project at the moment for a kind of fairytale opera and I hope when I'm filming it I don't fall into the trap of trying to make a professional movie. I want to make a fool of myself every morning by not pretending to know what it is that I exactly want."

Can the records transcend that unformed approach?

"Sometimes. It's like I say, the dialectic struggle of creating a synthesis out of the creative impulse and all the doubt and difficulty that goes with it. Someone like Mozart could do it brilliantly, could make the water sculptures freeze into solid form, whereas Picasso, who is hailed as the greatest genius of the century, never had it. He was suffering from being so perfect in an academic sense and he tried to fight against his genius. When he was very old he could allow his genius to just come out, but during times like his Cubist period, he was just a second-rate avant gardist."

He was always second or third to do a style, becoming brilliant at making it look good. I don't think he was ever conquering his heart but giving a texture of appearance. That's why he has the neurosis of doing it ten times a day, it's like someone who fucks a prostitute and has to do it four times a day every day because it never really happens."

How much of Meier is the artisan and how much the artist?

"For me there is no difference. Right now I am trying to find a teapot and if I find the right one, this for me will have as much spirit and as much soul as a great piece of art. Certain pots in Japan look like simple pots and yet they cost a million dollars, because for people who understand, there is such a spirit, a personality, for which people will give anything. I have a house in Zurich, which is a nice house and yet it is totally empty, we sit on cardboard boxes. I won't have anything in the house which doesn't have the spirit that I was talking about. I'd rather have a plastic spoon and throw it away than hang onto a silver spoon that has the wrong spirit. A chair can have as much personality as a painting, can be as important as The Annunciation by Leonardo."

How close are you to attaining the necessary simplicity?

"I don't know. The nice thing about, say, the chair is that it's not perfect. There's nothing more boring than perfection, you need the ridiculousness and humanity of imperfection. Sometimes I think I'm very close to being myself in a product and sometimes I'm miles away, but this is the challenge and as long as it goes on it's fun."

Do you know what you want?

"In practice, no. This is why the Marxist aesthetics never work, because they try to tell you in a thousand pages what is a good piece of art. I've done so much that has been lost for ever and the important thing is that I don't mind. I've got all these old things at home like films that have been sent back from the lab fifteen years ago and which are still unopened in the envelope. These things were important to me when they were created but afterwards I'm not interested. I have no inclination to push what I have produced."

Can you listen to your records?

"Sometimes, but as with most things, the product depresses me in a strange kind of way. The only thing that really excites me is opera, and that's mainly because of the spectacle, going to Milano and staying in a dark hotel in the foggy city, drinking wine and walking into the light and falling half asleep. It's like a dream. I have little interest in watching television or anything, I'd rather watch my little kid pack and unpack her suitcase. I think it has something to do with when we first got a TV in 1954, the year that we had the World Cup in the country. I remember the emptiest moments in my life as a kid when I switched on the TV and gorged myself, wanting more and more but feeling lousy afterwards."

A little later, when our words have drifted down, full of exchanges about Zen And The Art Of Golf (Meier having been a member of the Swiss National Team), about the seriousness of being playful, about luxury and beauty and, oh, a thousand and one glittery crystals, Dieter Meier will turn up at London's smelly Wag Club, with Yellomate Boris. They will be hosting a 'Vernissage', an exhibition of work in progress. Dull, hapless hacks will moan and mumble when Meier informs them that Yello will not be playing live. On every wall there gleams a flashy, embraceable vision of wide roads and interesting avenues, whilst all around the oldies wander, looking for a signpost marked 'Dull Tradition'. Meier will grin that grin of his and say something about cash. We'll wink across the room and someone will understand.

How do you want to be remembered, Dieter?

"As a man who was honest to himself, never cheated himself. No, as a good father. That's most important."

The good father. It was a pleasure.

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A MAN OF INCREDIBLE STRENGTH.
AN IMMORTAL ABOUT TO FACE HIS GREATEST CHALLENGE...

HIGHLANDERTM

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IN THE WEST END AND THROUGHOUT THE U.K.
FROM FRIDAY AUGUST 29TH

IMPROVING CULTURE

Everything But The Girl finally appear to
be on the verge of making it big . . .

"A COUPLE OF REVIEWS OF THE NEW album have said, 'It's over the top! It's over the top!' They're being real pooh-pooh wimps about it," complains Tracy Thorne. "You know, when we've been shouted at for being pooh-pooh wimps for the last two years. Having been around this long we're getting more and more self-confident all the time, and I think the over-the-topness of the record, the fact that it's more melodramatic than strictly naturalistic, is very much an expression of that. And to now have wimps turning round and telling us that we're over the top is absolutely hilarious. We're having a whale of a time reading that Everything But The Girl have gone completely over the top here and it's all in very poor taste! It's brilliant, it's exactly what we wanted! 'How dare they be so tasteless? They used to use nice little rimshots before, now they've got *limps*.'"

And you've got a new two-dimensional haircut.

"Mmmmm, I know."

"She was spending so much on cans of hairspray to make it stand up. But now she's discovered that you need just as much hairspray to make it lie down."

"My hair finds its natural level at mid-air. It's not happy to be either vertical or horizontal."

It's a constant struggle against nature, isn't it, with one's hair?

"It is. Well, life is really, a constant struggle against nature. I don't think we should ever conform to what we were given."

No, that's the purpose of Art, isn't it – to improve upon Nature?

"That's right, that's right."

The LP of which we were speaking is *Baby, The Stars Shine Bright*, Everything But The Girl's third. Those only casually acquainted with the group's work might, as suggested above, find some aspects of it surprising. Not, however, if they had witnessed the group in concert late last year, and witnessed Ben Watt singing a truly splendid version of *Always On My Mind* (the Christopher/Thompson/James supper club standard, perhaps interpreted to best effect by Elvis Presley).

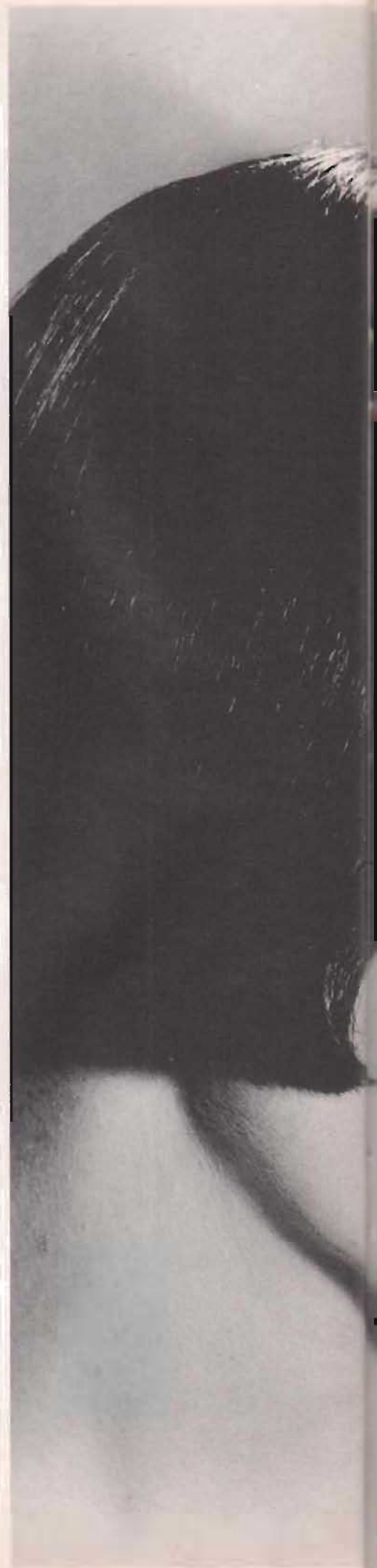
And then again, the fascination and facility with Country music, which is one of the notable things about the album, seems inevitable, really, when you consider the extremely maudlin nature of much of their back catalogue: material that firmly established the duo as leading lights of English Miserableism. The quintessential student-in-a-bedsit band, some perky rhythms and catchy tunes notwithstanding.

One of the perkier and catchier was *Each And Every One*, the sunny samba that became a bit of a hit and ensured solid sales for their first LP, *Eden*. I tried playing that the other night, by way of preparation for this interview. I was feeling fine – you know, sitting on top of the world with a rainbow around my shoulders – and I gave up after four songs. It is a bit bleak. Now with Morrissey, say, there is a pronounced theatrical quality to his despair, if that's what it is, that makes it a whole lot more engaging. Tears there may be, but he doesn't drown you in pools of limpid sincerity.

I wonder, would Everything But The Girl admit, in retrospect, that they might have appeared somewhat straight-faced and straight-laced? As it happens, yes, they will.

"Morrissey's sincerity is very easy to take because it's very artificial," opines Thorne, "whereas ours was a bit too much heart-on-the-sleeve. Sometimes. That was really just the way it came naturally to us to do it, and you can only write the way it comes naturally to you to write. I'm sure his style is completely natural to Morrissey – that's the way he instinctively presents himself. Our way was different, and it's only in

Interview by Mark Cordery.







EVERYTHING

►retrospect that you can see how you actually did appear, you can sort of step back from yourself and say, God, that really looks quite... sort of... um... miserable!"

Of course, they didn't actually *feel* miserable, most of the time. On the contrary. They were really enjoying themselves, making records, playing gigs. Tracy was kicking, though, against the image that people had had of her as a solo performer: "You have to go back and read the kind of stuff that was written about me. What lovely big eyes I had, and what lovely sweet songs I wrote. It was *horrific!*"

Everything But The Girl have (nearly) always been very *personal* writers. Whether writing in the first person or not, you could tell they were writing about themselves. Or perhaps someone they knew or had known quite well. Not likely someone or something they made up. No roving 'I' or flight of fantasy. Nothing *unnatural*, in other words. Anyone who didn't positively love it could dismiss *Eden* quite glibly: oh yeah, I know where *she's* coming from – a couple of stupid nasty boyfriends at college and then OD's on feminist literature. And him? Middle-class guilt. *Over sensitive*. Made for each other, aren't they? So long as they can keep their ideologies intact, heh-heh.

Unfair, yes. Understandable? Maybe. Anyway, they got a lot more blatant on their second LP, *Love Not Money*. They were living in London, not travelling much and, as Watt says, "It was a very dark year, politically, what with the miners' strike," which came through on a more outward-looking, overtly political LP. Watt also wrote a mildly controversial tune called *Sean* – "There's a Belfast girl I loved and lost" – projecting himself for once into a distant situation and imagining the effect of 'The Troubles' in Ireland on the lives of individual citizens.

This year has been different for them. They've been out and about a bit more. "European TV shows, seeing America for the first time," Watt recalls, "when I never really wanted to go there. Seeing the Hollywood sign, standing on top of the Empire State building, walking through the streets of Manhattan. Being in Rome... it sounds very glamorous. It is very glamorous, and I think the LP, the title of it, and what I think is the central song, Tracy's *A Country Mile*, somehow balances the contrast between your public life, being minor pop stars, and your private life as ordinary people who see it as a job..."

"It's quite a good job, really," says Thorne. "Good holidays, see the world. And it's true how it suddenly becomes very attractive... captivating."

What, the world?

"Yeah... oh, yeah. The idea of stardom becomes more attractive the closer you get to it. When it was nowhere on the horizon we could dismiss it, be quite happy being (*northern-accented*) ordinary folk. But you get a taste of it and it's... gripping."

What does it taste like?

"It's kinda fizzy."

"It goes up your nose, too often."

As the rock-soul textures of *Love Not Money* marked a change from the pastoral-latin feel of *Eden*, so *Baby*, *The Stars Shine Bright* sounds different again, on two major counts. Firstly, it features *dramatic gestures*. Strings.

Lots of them. Real ones, too. It was initially arranged by Ben Watt (whose father, Tommy, was a big band arranger) although the orchestra was conducted by one Nick Ingham.

Secondly, the songwriting style is different. Still personal, but more generally applicable. A modified pop language. Classically styled. Coverable material, in fact. Someone like Loretta Lynn, for example, would have no trouble with Watt's wonderful *Don't Let The Teardrops (Rust Your Shining Heart)*, and if Dusty Springfield has tired of the hi-energy tat she's put out lately she could do worse than consider *Careless*, a big ballad, very much in the style of her Greatest Hits. Needless to say, should either of these events or anything similar come to pass, the duo would be entirely thrilled. But it should also be said that the fact that Thorne sings these so effectively here makes her quite a singer.

Ben Watt makes the analogy between the method-acting of earlier Everything But The Girl material and the more, *ahem*, Brechtian approach they are taking now – and colours it with a creditable impersonation of Marlon Brando in *One-Eyed Jacks*: "Ahluyvababy, ahrillyluyva..." Better, he thought, that one should SPEAK UP, a bit. There is an audience out there, after all.

On *Love Not Money*, Tracy Thorne dedicated *Ugly Little Dreams* to Frances Farmer. Continuing this sequence of songs for her female film-star favourites, *Sugar Finney* is dedicated to Marilyn Monroe (the title being Arthur Miller's nickname for the embodiment of the all-American dream dame when he was married to it). The song mentions Jack and Bobby Kennedy.

"The nearest the Americans have ever got to a Royal Family, to good honest-to-God class," she says, obviously less than enamoured.

They did have a sort of radical cred for a while.

"Well... superficial radical cred."

Which brings us to Red Wedge.

"Oh, how neat! How neat! You must have practised that one in front of the mirror."

What about it then?

"We're doing some songs for the LP – we hope it's going to be called *Now That's What I Call Socialism!*"

It's not what a lot of people would call Socialism.

"The whole idea of Red Wedge", sighs Watt, somewhat wearily, "in a way, is very flakey. To get up and stand up behind the Labour Party is to stand behind quite a flakey party. It isn't meant to be uncompromising. I'm doing it really because I think if any party has to get in, then rather Neil Kinnock than Dr David Thatcher."

Lame.

"Yes, I know. It's a terrible sign of our age that the best one can say about the Labour Party is that they're Not The Conservative Party. That is a bit negative, but I think political idealism is quite a hard thing to have at the moment... it's difficult."

Everything But The Girl's travels have taken them to the USA – or at least the East and West coasts thereof – where, to their astonishment, audiences succeeded in dancing through the entirety of their set; to Germany, where they experienced the most seriously gruelling press interviews; and to Italy, a country they express a particular partiality for. They are also notably popular in Brazil and Spain. It can't be for the lyrics, so there must be something deep and hot-blooded in Tracy's vocals, they surmise. They also hear tell of clubs and bars in Japan where *A Distant Shore* is played morning, noon and night, and before I can say anything, they comment what dreary places these must be.

Everything But The Girl are also one of the few Western rock groups to be invited to play in the USSR, as part of an International Youth Festival (along with London reggae group Misty In Roots – a prospect that fairly boggles the mind). Apart from the food – or rather the lack of it, since their vegetarianism phased their hosts to the extent that they survived virtually on cabbage, boiled or grilled – they had a very interesting time.

Watt: "I don't think we saw much of the nitty gritty of urban Russian life, but we had some *weird* experiences.

We went round the Kremlin one day that the public had been denied access, a day off or something – our guide managed to talk the guys on the door into letting us in – and it *was* deserted. It was bizarre. They have these absolutely beautiful, beautiful cathedrals within the Kremlin which, obviously, because of the revolution, aren't talked of much anymore, and they're just there, completely stripped of any religious items. Just the walls, and the building itself. And these rather shifty janitors walking around, not sure whether or not they should be looking at the paintings..."

Thorne: "And all the Czars are buried there. They're all in big stone tombs, you know, like Westminster Abbey, and they're all shoved, like job lots, all piled up in a corner. Stacked up, like a warehouse."

They remark also on the beauty of the chandeliered, marble-floored underground stations, and the fact that you can travel from one side of the city to the other for about 5p. But there's nowhere to eat in between. No restaurants.

"Hardly any," says Watt. "There's no Cafe Society, so unlike Paris or Rome or New York, or even London, there's no sense of any... any form of public assembly (*which seems oddly contradictory, when you think about it*). You're not allowed to stand in a group of people for more than about five minutes before someone comes along and blows a whistle."

Why? That's unanswerable, I suppose.

"It's completely unanswerable," agrees Thorne.

"There are things that when you're a guest in someone's country, you don't ask your host. As sensible people we have some idea of what Russian society is probably like, but there are things that, when your guide is as charming as ours was, you just don't draw attention to, you know?"

"I should imagine, if some sort of cafe society was allowed to flourish, or some sort of bohemian underground was allowed to get together, then naturally political ideals would be formed among those people that would be contrary to the standard way of life."

"People constantly outwit the system anyway," says Thorne. "The black market over there is really flourishing and I think it's that, as much as anything, that they're trying to stamp on. Acquisition of private wealth, which is what the black market is all about – people actually making money for themselves."

"It's against the law to be unemployed in Russia as well. You're not allowed to be unemployed for more than 30 days at a time. So what some people do, to outwit the system, is to take a job for a day, and then they resign or get themselves sacked, and then they take 29 days off..."

On the black market?

"Yeah. That's just an example. I mean, we were continually being approached by 14 and 15 year-old kids asking us if we wanted to change any money, so they could get western currency, hard currency, which is obviously far more valuable than roubles. But I certainly never came across any Russians clamouring for my Levi's."

Back home, Ben Watt is quite candid about their next move.

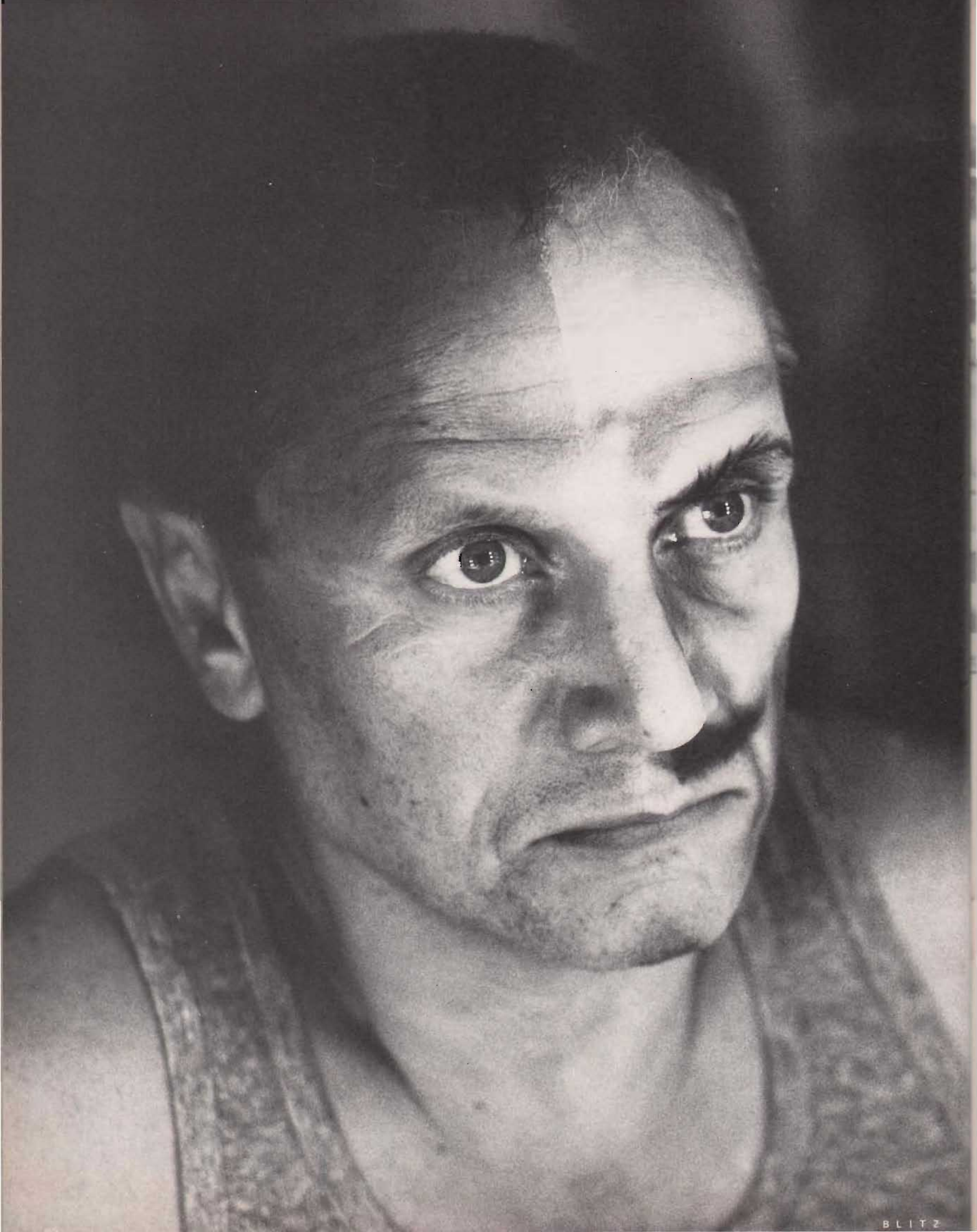
"I am very keen with this record, especially the way it's turned out, to crack through to the more sort of crossover market, if it's at all possible, without compromising too much. I'm a bit fed up with resting on this level, which is slightly above the British Indie scene, which we seem to have aspired to so far. I was reading an interview with Dusty Springfield this morning, in which she was saying that all she ever wanted to do was to play on the best pop shows and in the best supper clubs, and appeal to both those audiences. And I see nothing wrong with that at all. I'd love to play the Talk Of The Town – but it doesn't exist anymore. And do *Always On My Mind* in my white tuxedo."

On my way out of the neat West London flat – not theirs – where we met, I see some colour prints on the kitchen table, fruits of a recent photo session, in which Tracy appears as a well-to-do flapper, Ben as her dapper beau. The clothes and the colours shine brightly. They suit them.

PERNOD

PERNOD





B E R K

Steven Berkoff's conception of Theatre is as

a vibrant, enthralling, life-giving colossus,

far removed

from the

middle-class

&

M A U L

sentimentalism that dominates the West End and

Broadway. On the whole he has succeeded in

bringing the colossus to life with a series of

thrilling, challenging works, the most recent of

which, his adaptation of Kafka's *The*

Metamorphosis, is coming to the end of its

London run.

Interview by Paul Morley.

Photographs by Robin Barton.

PLACE

A quiet room somewhere near nowhere. We feel that there is a serious conversation taking place. BERK is strong-looking, speaks powerfully, and never smiles. MAUL is weak-looking, speaks as he finds, and tries not to smile.

ONE WAY

MAUL: On the other hand...

BERK: Well, I think it's going to create a great controversial storm and bring down the government.
(silence)

A SECOND PLACE

BERK: The use of props is yet another question.

MAUL: Artaud had something to say about that.

BERK: That's a relief.

MAUL: What are we going to talk about?

BERK: ... there are the dangers threatening the life of the mind and the life of the theatre in particular ... the mental sluggishness of the bourgeois on the one hand, and on the other the tyranny of political regimes and movements.

MAUL: Can we talk about the connection between desire and inspiration?

BERK: If you like.
(silence)

THREE DOM

BERK: ... of greed, violence, sensation, sentiment, sex. Consequently once this pattern has been established there is a predictable and constant turnover of a cretinous and soporific kind of mulch which is actually like a kind of cancer of the mind. This poison, of

► mediocrity, of the lowest common denominator, it's a mental ecological disaster. From time to time you've got to push through that, you've got to give yourself time to get in there and let the audience breathe something that you feel is right. You want to give people something that makes them become sensitive again, that makes them become aware, perceptive, conscious of what's going on; something that makes them become critical, that excites. I move in and create something which is absolutely exciting for me, and I push myself out to the ultimate potential of where I can go in terms of what theatre represents to me... and theatre is the ultimate art form. Theatre is the ultimate because it changes every night, it can never be fixed, every night you are on trial, your head is put onto the chopping block...

MAUL: What is at the heart of everything you do?

BERK: It's a desire to really give. That's basically it.

MAUL: To be generous.

BERK: To be generous, yes. Because that is the most fundamental power. You want to give as much as you can. It's a very strong instinct; you want to amaze, to create something which comes from the most intimate part of your being. I think this is the natural instinct of all children.

MAUL: You have to remain a child.

BERK: You have to have elements of the child.

MAUL: There seems to be something in the body that forces the child out as one grows up, to wherever. Something beyond simply social conditioning that melts idealism.

BERK: You've got to keep using your adrenalin. Don't let the child go. You have to fight so that the adrenalin never dies up. You must never succumb to the ordinary, to the obvious, to the predictable...

MAUL: What do you expect from life?

BERK: MORE!!! I expect lots of different things... freedom from anxiety, that's the best thing. Total freedom from anxiety by actually expressing yourself most fundamentally, at the top of your best. That's what I like, to see if I can keep regenerating whatever spirit there is inside me, the spirit that shows to me the freedom of imagination, beyond the narrow confines...

MAUL: Is there, then, something religious about your kind of theatre?

BERK: It's religious, it's positive, it's life enhancing, it's idealistic, it's got to be radical, it's got to be unique, it's got to be anti-establishment, sexual, stimulating, it's got to reach levels which are very primitive, very tribal...

MAUL: How come you ended up being so committed to the theatre, that this should be the place where you find the work and wonder?

BERK: There was no other way that I could express myself in such a positive way.

MAUL: How did you find this out?

BERK: Through trial and error. Trying different things. If you couldn't do anything else, you became an actor. An actor seemed to be a good way out. It was an escape. I didn't think, aah, I must become an actor, I just thought this is a nice job, earn a few bob, get a skill... When I was eleven, everyone used to ask me what I wanted to be. So I would say, an actor.

MAUL: Do you ever feel that this eleven year-old child, his decision, has made up what you are? That the child decided what you would be? And that you have him to either thank or blame for everything you are? If you could meet that eleven year-old, what would you say to him?

BERK: I would be very grateful. I mean, that eleven year-old child saw wondrous images. Before I was twelve I'd travelled, I'd been across America, I'd seen the skyline of New York, life made me amazed and fascinated.

MAUL: The child is totally astonished by living.

BERK: This astonishment is what you must keep, so that you do not become deadened. Life to me is unbelievably astonishing. It's sometimes so astonishing that you have to write down what you feel so that you can give that sense of astonishment to other people; you have to write it down and perform it. Through performance in the theatre you can get over that awesomeness of what it is to be alive.

MAUL: This communication is the act of generosity.

BERK: That's right. Communicating the awesome power of what you see as if through a great microscope, to seize, to hurl, to use language like jewels and throw it out at people so that everybody can be in on the adventure, the possibilities... In my writing, in my directing, the images must be as powerful and as awesome as you can possibly imagine. Anything else is betrayal. So that every act of creation, every part of each act, is an act of purging; so that it's life or death... Everything you do that you truly believe in must be a life or death struggle...

CLEARLY FOURTH

MAUL: What a wealth of space there is within us. Who dares to adventure there?

BERK: We need explorers...

MAUL: At the very least.

BERK: That's your opinion.

MAUL: I try my best.

BERK: In your opinion.

MAUL: In my opinion! Opinions suffocate me.

BERK: That's one way of looking at it.

MAUL: On the other hand...

(silence)

FIVE MINUTES

BERK: My mind's scattered today. Usually I'm fine. It's just there's a drumming in my head. Something to do with the play.

MAUL: So I am interfering?

BERK: No, you're not interfering. It's just there with me all the time I speak, it's like a little block in the way of my thoughts... It's like an itch. It keeps getting at me... should I do it this way? Or should I try it another way? Just this one little part of the play.

MAUL: Why can such an irritation become so overpowering?

BERK: It seeks to dominate you.

MAUL: It has a life of its own.

BERK: It's like it feeds on power, on energy, on worry. It wants to suck your blood like a vampire. It's an anxiety, and whenever you're prepared, like just before you go on stage you're already charged up, and then it gets you. It makes you worry. It dilutes your energy, it distracts. Anytime, at any moment, it may wish to come upon you. Whenever you want to give something your full attention, all your energy, it comes to feed off your blood. In the end you have to say to yourself, 'that's it, I can't be bothered, I give up', and you get rid of the demon. Or you say, 'I'm working, this is what I'm doing', and you fight the demon with force, with concentration. And then one demon goes, and another one comes. It's a constant chasing around the room... Right now it means my marbles aren't quite with me.

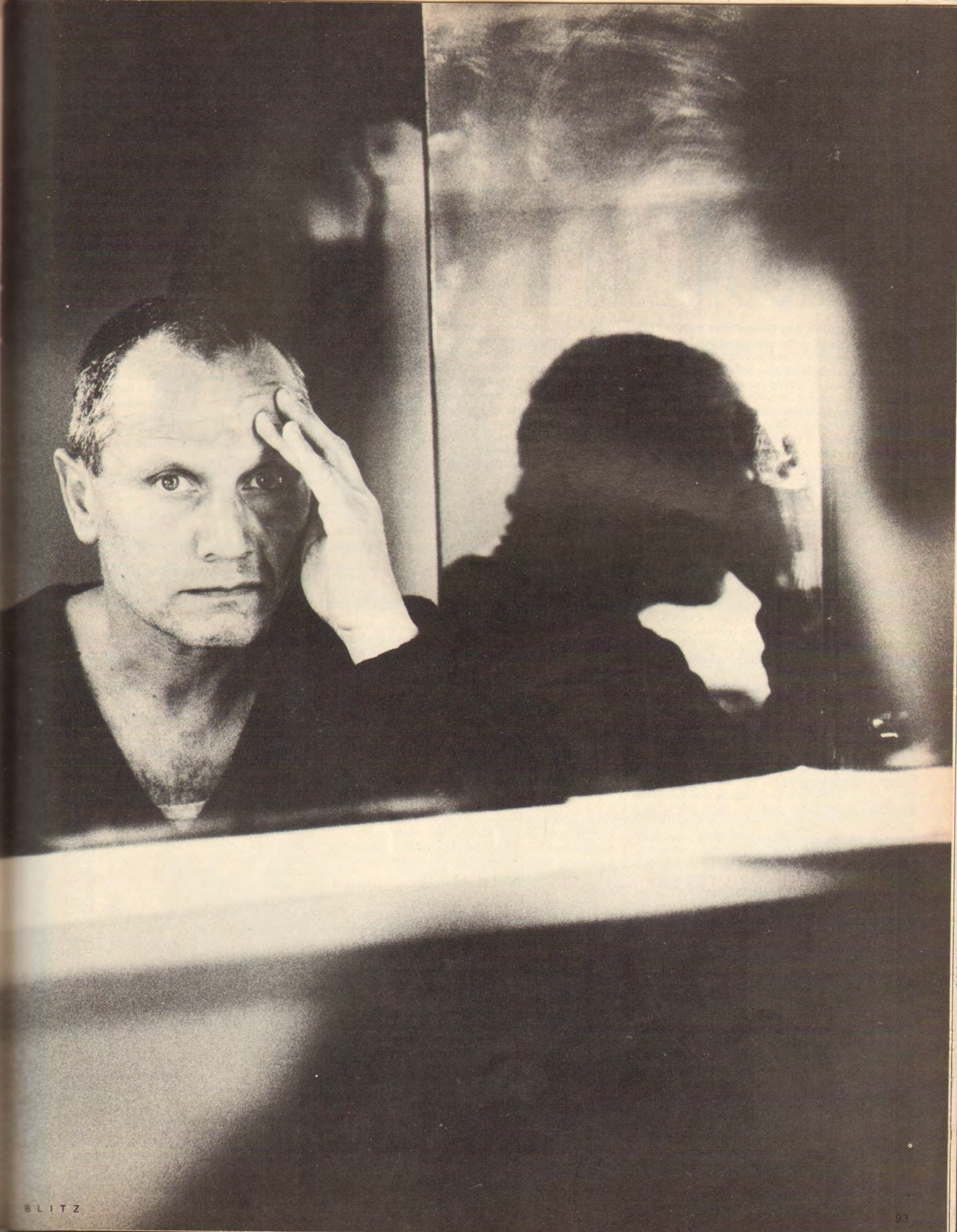
(Silence)

SIX TO DEATH

BERK: For myself and the public. So I feel that if I'm neglecting the public and if all they see on stage is the dross, all that crap that's laid down for them, then I feel a responsibility to come out and show them what theatre really is... Too much inhaling of bad theatre can stunt growth. There is, out there, definitely an audience which is perceptive, hungry and young, and which is dying for something which is positive and which says something to them; an audience whose antenna haven't been worn down and stunted by the usual kind of middle-class intellectual kind of junk which is portrayed by what are called the 'quality theatres'.

MAUL: What do you think is the drive behind the people who calculate this 'quality theatre' - they must have some kind of commitment.

BERK: Their drive is a dislocation. These people, they have a pleasant and modest up-bringing, modest, middle-class, Sainsbury's and Boots, a bit of University, and then they get involved vicariously with dealing with some really great and powerful epic energy, like the French Revolution or something; and what you eventually end up with as these people take on the theatre is like, Sainsbury's values dealing with epic stuff. It's a total dislocation. They should teach, do something worthwhile, like nursing or something... These people will never vandalise or take chances, they try to rationalise far too much, to give to theatre an ordered, emotionless, semi-rational Englishness, which is obviously at the centre very suspicious of art, and of anything to do with art... Art is to do with instinct. Instinctive drive, intuitive behaviour, radical decision, off-the-wall solutions to problems... This English rationalist approach to theatre always leaves things just as they were; it sees everything as it has been seen before... This theatre drives people to madness, stops them dead, sends them asleep... It's theatre that continually delves into the knickers of the bourgeois, show a bit of adultery, some impotence, a little satire, some faint knocking on the press barons or whatever... With theatre at its best, the experiences can stay with you all your life, the images that you see, the life, you've never seen anything like it... Whereas with ►



► the other theatre, West End and Broadway, you might be amused, you could be entertained, but it won't stay with you... Because it deals merely with everyday life, it is confirmation of prejudice and rules and regulations, it does not communicate anything. If man cannot communicate, can he be expected to control his destiny? If anybody is fascinated and taken in by this middle-class theatre, then they are conditioned beyond hope.

MAUL: Do you feel condescending when you accuse people of being conditioned?

BERK: No. I think there is a very strong conditioning process which goes on in people, a kind of castrating of the consciousness. And the more conditioned people are, the more they will respond like lapdogs to certain sentimental approaches. And it usually is sentimental.

MAUL: The 'sentimental' that wipes away the horror and smears everywhere the security.

BERK: Yes, it is, a security based on a very straightforward set of aims, a security based on struggle, achievement, entertainment, children, a bit of pain in the beginning and then getting a good job, maybe succeeding... it's all to do with very simple satisfactions, a small-minded self-preservation that progressively dulls the senses and induces a terrifying false sense of calm. The possibility to appreciate life and love in such a dead conditioned state is gradually diminished. I want to go way beyond those surfaces, and that has to be a little bit threatening. But the imagination can create its own security, through the terror, the absurdity, the feeling that can come through that this world is not our true world and it must be changed... this is what is important, the ways that we can develop and evolve and renew ourselves through confrontation and challenge. There's too much a fear of difference, a drive for conformity on the level of the timid sentimental genteel that must be opposed.

MAUL: Would you ever see a justification for violence.

BERK: There's no justification for violence at all.

MAUL: Not even against those people who contribute to the conditioning? Somewhere amidst your resentment towards the middle-class saturation, the retreat into the wordless lifeless narrative, there might be violence...

BERK: No, no, some middle-class values are very good as well. The values of decency, respect, understanding; but talking artistically, these people, and this way of life, have to be changed every few years, there has to be continually a new way of perceiving life, there always has to be learning so that stereotyped patterns can be resisted. Ultimately that way of life can destroy any real purpose in your life. It's not violence I'm interested in, though, in the end; it's more love, people identifying with each other, a love that means no one could drop a bomb on anyone else, a love that is far more powerful and provocative than the fatuous sentiment rubbish that passes for love in the theatre... We're going off the subject a bit here.

MAUL: What subject?

BERK: Where were we?

MAUL: Somewhere between violence and love

BERK: How did we get there?

MAUL: Via art and brainwashing.

BERK: Look, in the end I know I'm just talking about a

good night out, that is the theatre. It's not about changing people especially, just stimulating them, making them feel they have been somewhere, that they don't have to be beaten. I don't pretend like I'm going to be the great messiah come to spread the message, to revolutionise people's minds... although I do think there has to be an *element* of that. That can be the power of the theatre. It can be wonderfully critical... where we are now?

MAUL: We're at the end of Six.

BERK: That's a bloody relief.

MAUL: Why?

BERK: There are only so many times you can say certain things... in the end it is the action that is important.

MAUL: It's all very well and good and attractive to be non-conformist and to celebrate the unexpected state of the universe and to bemoan the willingness of people to opt for the easy option but...

BERK: Yes?

MAUL: I forgot. I'm trapped.

BERK: It can't be helped. Am I here for much longer?

MAUL: Let's just complete ourselves. There must be a sense of something that we want to leave behind.

BERK: All art, all thought is aggressive. Will that do?

MAUL: Let's try Seven.

BERK: I'm with you.

MAUL: You've no choice.

BERK: For now.

MAUL: For now.

(silence)

THE SEVEN FEEL

BERK: Yeah, countries rise and fall but the strength is the communicating, not necessarily the wisdom of the policies. That's why fascism works so well, why it appeals. It appeals to very primitive instincts, it appeals to hate, survival instincts. Hatred, racism, very very primitive instincts. That's the most primitive instinct – hate.

MAUL: Are you saying that you want to appeal to the civilised parts of people?

BERK: No, no, you misunderstand... to the same area, that same area of gut reaction, but with different value. You're still looking for a gut reaction.

MAUL: What's the moral difference between your values and the values of fascism?

BERK: They're preaching anti-life. I'm preaching pro-life. Totally different. But we're approaching people at the same gut level. We're going for what people are beneath the conditioning, beyond the language...

MAUL: How much does what is outside of our vocabulary, beyond the words that dictate our thoughts and fashion our reality, play a part in your work?

BERK: I think it's the basic battery, the basic mechanism... Beyond language is awareness and compassion, the highest forms of intelligence. Vocabulary is very important. When you reduce vocabulary you do reduce thinking, everything is reduced to simplicity.

MAUL: So how much of that place behind our thoughts infects your work?

BERK: A hell of a lot. It's 50% language and 50% not-language. A lot of my work is based on gesture and rhythm, shape and space. The body is very important in my work. I think ecstasy can come through the manipulation of your body and the shapes you create with it... an image on the stage can reduce an audience to tears. A moving body is the most beautiful thing in the world. The rhythm of the body can suggest all sorts of possibilities. The body, in a way, is what you *are*. Language is what is owned collectively.

MAUL: The body and the mind is our uniqueness.

BERK: Yes, uniqueness. And when you go to any of those middle-class theatres, they hate the body, they are anti-sex, anti-life and certainly anti-body. Theatres don't know how to use the body. They neglect whole areas of rhythm and instinct. In a sense I combine body and language, it can become elemental... so that if speech conceals more than it confides there is other language happening, something inward and direct.

MAUL: How much further can we take this part of the conversation?

BERK: (silence)

EIGHT RED

BERK: A lot of my plays are written in verse, they deal with archetypal themes which will never fade, never die. *Pravda* is dead already, because it deals with Murdoch. Its language isn't rich enough or juicy enough and it doesn't truly get into the nature of the time. Right now we're on a very tight path, it's the age of the dead politician, a lack of idealism, gross materialism, sickness and masturbation, the age of narcissism, and my work revels in all that, and shows that we can break through it and out and beyond.

MAUL: Do you feel guilty of preaching?

BERK: You're asking me questions. I am replying. I am passionate enough that it will sound like preaching. I just want there to be a future. (silence)

SAY ELEVEN

MAUL: Your next play is to be *The Sinking Of The Belgrano*, which I believe is about a very deliberate murder. How do you anticipate this being positioned into our lives at this moment?

BERK: Well, I think it's going to create a great controversial storm and bring down the government. (silence)

Steven Berkoff is playing 'father' in his stripped, damned adaption of Kafka's The Metamorphosis at London's Mermaid Theatre, with Tim Roth as the son. He is preparing his Sinking Of The Belgrano, which will feature Maggie Steed as 'Maggot.'

Paul Morley is on the third page of his novel, Comfortable.



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Music Publishing is the grey area of the record business, sometimes generating as much as a half of an artist's income, but nevertheless often disregarded as the record companies' unglamorous and parasitic half-brother. The hunting ground of lawyers and accountants, it's also notorious for its rip-offs — for example, contracts that buy a songwriter's entire output for his lifespan plus fifty years in return for a tiny fraction of the money it earns. In an edited extract from his new book *Expensive Habits: The Dark Side Of The Music Industry*, Simon Garfield explores the workings of the publishing business.

H I T S &

THE NEXT TIME YOU MEET STING, OR Elton John, or Gilbert O'Sullivan in the street, ask them how much they understand about music publishing. If they don't turn green, or red, or punch you out, then they'll most likely say, "a lot more than I used to, thank God."

All three recently claimed that they had been ripped off, or at least severely exploited, by their publishers, and, up to the point where they decided to fight back, they estimated that the bad deals had collectively cost them millions. We are, after all, dealing with *Roxanne*, *Rocket Man* and *Clair* here.

And all three went on to prove the old industry adage that 'where there's a hit, there's a writ', mostly with some courtroom success. But many more — perhaps hundreds — were ripped off so comprehensively that they emerged too beaten even to contemplate litigation. And even more are still too ashamed to admit they've been done.

In January 1972 an advert appeared in the industry paper *Record and Tape Retailer* promoting the talents of songwriter Tony Macaulay. He had written for Presley, Andy Williams, Glen Campbell, The Fifth Dimension and The Hollies, he included *Build Me Up Buttercup*, *Baby, Now That I've Found You* and Edison Lighthouse's number one *Love Grows Where My Rosemary Goes* among his hits, and the ad had it that he was looking forward 'to another successful year...'. 'Successful' may have meant hits, but it certainly didn't mean money. The 28 year-old talent, a dark and longish haired man with a goatee beard, a boxer's nose and a passion for silk neckscarves and flowery shirts (as seemed fitting at the time), had been receiving the sort of minor-league rewards that had him having to borrow money to go on holiday. There were few, if any, popular songwriters who could touch him for the number of swirling, big-production love thumpers he could place in the charts. He himself acknowledged they weren't exactly high art, but that wasn't the point; they sold and should have kept him in the sheerest silk for life. Instead, of course, there was this rotten publishing deal he had signed six years earlier...



WRITERS

In 1966 he was unknown, eager, gifted and kiddable. He had already written a boxful of songs with friend John McLeod, but none had been published, and he began looking for work as a producer. He approached Mr and Mrs Aaron Schroeder, the sole shareholders in a large American publishing corporation, with this box of songs and production aim in June. In July they came back with the hope of production work in the future, but a definite offer of publishing terms now. Macaulay jumped at it: the Schroeders' company, January Music, had an extensive and valuable catalogue, and the affiliates worldwide promised unlimited contacts and opportunities. He was told that the deal was the standard form on offer to all the best writers of the hour, and that being with the publishers' London-based affiliate would ensure close personal attention.

With no legal advice, the 22 year-old signed a true horror: if this was standard, there could surely have been no safer or more lucrative job in the whole music industry than owning a publishing house.

1. He signed away his entire output on a worldwide deal that was to last for at least five years. The term was extendable to ten if the writer made more than £5,000 in royalties over the first period, and his copyrights were given up for life plus fifty years.

2. The Schroeders had no obligation to promote his work or provide a minimum income or salary. While Macaulay was forbidden to sell his songs elsewhere, his publishers could merely put his compositions in a box and print or push none of them. Also the Schroeders could cancel the contract at a month's notice; the writer, by contrast, was locked in for the full terms and no get-outs.

3. Macaulay received an advance of £50, recoupable against royalties. Once he had earned £50 he received another advance of the same amount and so on through the years. Hence the Schroeders never stood to risk more than a token sum.

4. Royalties were set at 10% of all sheet music receipts and a straight 50:50 split with his publishers over all other 'mechanical' (ie, record sale) and performance royalties.

Irrespective of the harshness of the other terms, the last clause did indeed seem to be as much of a norm as Macaulay could have hoped for. He was unknown after all, and he knew that even established writers accepted 50:50. What he hadn't counted on, or what he hadn't understood, was that awful things happened when the Schroeders licensed his songs to their affiliate publishing houses abroad – notably in the US, German and Scandinavia.

In 1969, seeing his particularly poor foreign royalty statements as evidence that the Schroeders had done little to push his work abroad, Macaulay sought advice from specialist industry accountant Laurence Myers. Myers initiated an audit of the books of the Schroeders' central US office, and uncovered some astonishing results – a series of overseas rake-offs that left the writer with only a fraction of his expected earnings.

The system worked like this: the Schroeders' German publishing wing, for example, collected £100 in royalties in respect of a Macaulay song. They then took a £30 cut for their time and passed on the rest to the Schroeders' head office in New York. Head office would then take a 50% cut of the £70, just for being head office, and pass on the remaining £35 to Schroeders in London. The London office then took their agreed split of 50:50, and the balance – £17.50 – was sent to Macaulay. So the publishers didn't have to lift a finger to make the song a European hit, and they could still claim 82.5% of the royalties. It looked quite a racket.

In the end Macaulay won the legal battle, but it wasn't an easy victory. The Schroeders argued that the contract small print explained that overseas affiliates were entitled to a cut of royalties collected and that the double rake-off had been an accounting error. Furthermore, they said, the terms of the contract were by no means unfair for the time. Such was certainly the case, and it was only the fact that Macaulay didn't take proper legal advice at time of signing that freed him from his contract. The copyrights of his songs, however, stayed with the Schroeders.

Despite the evidence of Macaulay's case or the more recent, more notable, legal battles fought by the likes of

Sting, Elton John and Gilbert O'Sullivan, it continues to happen, almost hourly. Another young sucker signs some lousy deal that will tie up their written output for life and will yield only the measliest of incomes (for them, at any rate), all because getting on Top Of The Pops, or the cover of the music mags, or to the top of the Billboard charts, burns as a fierce and blinding ambition above all others. They've seemingly learnt nothing from the fates of their hugely successful, if not always hugely wealthy predecessors.

Talk to five record company hacks about the changing face of the music industry as a whole, and you'll conclude that publishing is a very lame parasitic relative of the recording business. It's obvious: it generates about a fifth of total industry wealth, seldom takes big-money risks, does next to no work that a trained monkey and a computer couldn't do better, and continually rips off artists. In short, it gives the rest of the industry a bad name.

Some of that's true of course, but it's so *disrespectful*. Videos and compact discs and twelve-inchers are fine, but before all that was the song, or at least the tune, and that's still relatively essential to most branches of a business of music. Besides, the detractors forget: before records, music publishing *was* the industry.

These days, however, most publishing companies are purely banks. Many lawyers feel that they could do the same job themselves. And most will tell you that record companies have almost refined publishing companies out of existence. Thirty years ago you talked of a great song, but today we talk of great records.

As with a lot of other watersheds, the massive publishing watershed happened with The Beatles. Before them, you could have had a UK hit parade made up not only of songs the artists hadn't written themselves, but of songs that were simply cover shots of US hits. After them, bands like The Who got a recording contract *only if* they recorded their own material.

Simply put, recording your own work meant less dependence and perhaps greater longevity. For a record company it meant that if an act on your label could come up with one classic then it could most likely come up with another: an all-in package.

But if you could eliminate the creative need for a publisher to that extent, why not try and integrate the whole racket and get your own publishing wing? And so by the early seventies, every major record company had what many didn't ten years earlier – their own publishing firms.

The reality, though, was that the control of music publishing remained largely outside the scope of the record industry, not least because their roles were so different and because artists had often already ►



"Copeland told

the Daily Mirror that Sting

had earned Virgin £5 million for only a £200 outlay."

HITS & WRITS

► arranged a long-term publishing deal with another company prior to getting a record contract.

The fact that, despite this, the record majors still wanted to retain a publishing set-up of their own could mean but one thing: there were vast amounts of money to be made. The sixties and early seventies were swindle time, and as much if not more in publishing than recording. Even in the mid seventies artists were persuaded that publishing was something that you virtually gave away. It was still as much of a grey area as the rest of the industry, and this suited the publishers just fine. By today's standards, most were sharks by any other name – Tin Pan Alligators will do.

It was the lawyers that subsequently changed things most. Things are now at the point where publishers are squealing that they can hardly make an honest profit any more – the deals, they say, are too tight, too competitive, too favourable to the artists. Whereas once they split their artist's total income 50:50, they now find that it's 75:25 or even 80:20 in the writer's favour. Which is how it should be, say the lawyers – you can't do nothing. Which is unfair, say the publishers – we still do loads.

Richard Thomas, for example, ex-band manager, ex-A&R man, currently the managing director of CBS Songs, says he spends his publishing week directing artists' careers in more ways than he has time to count. Perhaps most important of all, he says, is that he nurtures talent from embryonic levels, citing his success in signing Lloyd Cole & The Commotions and then getting them a major Polydor recording deal. And if the lawyers intrude into his patch and his company's profits much more, he feels that the creative push will be lost for good, and it will be their fault.

If you were to standardise a new band's mid eighties publishing deal, it would look something like this:

The advance: an amount – £25,000, say – against your agreement to hand over copyright to a certain number of songs written over a set period of time, with the copyright assigned for a specified number of years. What that's likely to mean is all your songs for at least a year, with four more years at the company's option. The length of time that the company owns the copyright varies on your bargaining power. The old classic would be your lifespan plus fifty years, but it can be whittled down to ten or fifteen years, and three-year copyrights are not unknown.

Territory: the wider the territorial scope of the copyright, the more beneficial the deal is likely to be, since it allows the company to then license copyrights to your songs. But if you offer UK terms only, your lawyer or manager can then negotiate other deals overseas, offering greater control, and ultimately a potentially more sizeable income.

Royalties: royalty income comes through two basic channels. You get a mechanical royalty on each sale of a recorded song, set at 6¼% of the retail selling price, split equally between the copyright holders of both A and B sides, or ten ways in the case of a ten-track LP. Thus the holder of the B side copyright earns just as much as the A side holder. Sales are logged and cash distributed by the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS). In 1984, the MCPS collected £14 million worldwide. The Performing Rights Society (PRS) collects about five times as much, some £60 to £70 million per annum. Each public performance of a copyright is logged and charged, either on a performance rate (in 1985 BBC Radio One paid £33 for every three minutes of broadcast) or via a licensing fee charged to pubs, dance-halls, hotels, hospitals and the like. The income is then divided proportionately among the thousands of registered society members. In 1984, after deductions, some £55 million was shared out between 15,500 writers and 2,500 publishers. Most received less than £250. 16% got between £250 and £1,000, 10% between £1,000 and £5,000, 3% between £5,000 and £10,000, and only 3% more than £10,000.

The publishers: pressure from the lawyers has pushed the royalty split very much in favour of the writer. In 1985 the unknown Then Jerico landed an 80:20 split with the massive and prestigious Dick James organisation and top acts are signed on an 85:15 or 90:10 split. Some publishers will even allow the artist 100% if it's likely to increase prestige and attract new business.

The lawyers' auction is the best sign of hit potential that an artist could want. The tighter a publishing house will split, then the more confident it is of your selling and earning ability. Which means the less work it will have to do to reap any rewards.

That at least is the basic contractual equation. What it omits is the risk factor, the factor that dictates that for every success there is a flop, or maybe twenty, for even the most experienced publishing firm. It makes life exciting of course, but it invariably encourages rule and ethic bending.

If you can pay an artist less than the norm, or if you are obliged to do nothing with that artist's work, or if you can illicitly hive off an extra share of a writer's income, then why not do it? Surely it's almost justifiable in such a high-risk, high-cost environment... And it's not as if you'd be the first to try it on.

In June 1985, Elton John was a multi-millionaire getting richer by the hour. Strange, then, to see him in the High Court in the Strand suing his publishers and former record label Dick James Music (DJM) for the return of his copyrights and master recordings. Strange too, to see him seeking damages for the

improper diversion of his royalties. Along with lyricist Bernie Taupin he was claiming back 136 songs written between 1967 and 1973, including *Rocket Man*, *Crocodile Rock* and the rest of his early hits – songs that have already reputedly grossed £200 million.

He claimed that he was impossibly naive when he signed with DJM, that he trusted Dick James implicitly and hence sought no independent legal advice, that both his recording and publishing royalties were cripplingly mean, and that DJM had consciously concealed the workings of a network of overseas publishing affiliates which greatly diminished his earnings.

If John lost, he might face costs of up to £1½ million. But if he won, he might gain assets estimated at £30 million. More significantly, an outright John victory might well turn the entire music-publishing industry inside out and unleash a pack of major-artist writs all straining for a similar prize. Many industry staffers saw it as potentially the most important biz court case ever, and Dick James's son Stephen went so far as to predict that if John won, "The music business is finished." The case ended in November 1985, after more than fifty court days. It was quite a battle; it's likely that some publishers are still quaking at the outcome.

Judged by today's standards, not always a great idea, John's first DJM publishing contract was a disaster: a classic case of low royalties and savagely prohibitive terms. "I didn't think about going to a solicitor when I signed," bleated Elton in court. "I just trusted Mr James. Their terms seemed very fair to us at the time... anything anyone told me I believed."

John and Taupin each received a £50 publishing advance and a weekly retainer of £15 and £10 respectively ("For jeans," said Dick James), and were required to produce at least eighteen songs per year for three years, with a DJM option to extend it for a further three. All income, excluding sheet music, would be split 50:50. The contract, however, made no provision for an increased cut if successful. In theory, John could have written *Rocket Man* and all the rest and still be paid an unknown's royalty. The worst thing was that these were standard, or marginally below standard, deals for the time; hundreds of artists must have been stung like this.

Eighteen years after signing, and well over a decade since the likes of *Your Song*, *Daniel*, *Honky Cat*, *Crocodile Rock* and the rest, the courts were faced with a mass of conflicting evidence. John's counsel accused Dick James of 'undue influence', not least at the time of signing. Elton was then 20, James 48, and as the publisher of the Beatles' Northern Songs catalogue was one of the most respected industry men alive. James denied the charge.

John's counsel claimed also that John and Taupin had lost royalties of around £1 million that had been deliberately siphoned off in an overseas publishing scam that saw 'shell' subsidiaries, which may have had neither staff nor offices, rake off as much as 50% of the writers' income before returning it to be split in the UK. DJM's counsel denied this, claiming it was normal business practice in return for the services provided. DJM's counsel suggested that John and Taupin had only brought the case at all on the advice of John's new lawyer; the writers' counsel maintained that a third of their songs were as yet unpublished and that their concern was less with the past than the future. John's counsel claimed there had been excessive fees and unfairly low royalties; DJM countered that while John had earned £13.4 million on his records and £1.14 million on his publishing up to December 1982, the DJM record labels made profits of only £8.5 million, and the entire DJM publishing group worldwide had profits of only £2.6 million.

In a four-hour judgement in December 1985, Mr Justice Nicholls agreed that John had suffered under the 'dominating influence' of James, but reasoned that the gap between the signing and the writ had been too long, not least because he had never previously voiced any complaint against James. There was no doubt either that DJM had invested large sums of time and money in breaking John worldwide, and that there should be certain reward for the risk-taking. His manager John Reid was also seen to have benefited ►



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"Dick James's son Stephen

went so far as to predict that if

Elton John won, 'The music business is finished.'"

HITS & WRITS

► from Dick James's continued goodwill between the termination of the contracts and this action. In the light, too, of his subsequent and continued success, Mr Justice Nicholls failed to set aside the contracts, and declined to order the return of the copyrights or master recordings.

Taupin's main claims also failed, in part because he took no action 'until stirred up by others'. The judge did, however, find DJM guilty of the 'deliberate concealment' of those overseas sub-publishing negotiations (excluding those in the US) which substantially decreased John and Taupin's income.

The extent of their award was not specified, and even now it may take many further months of audits, interest calculations and hair tugging to agree on a figure. But the respective PR machines began grinding into overdrive just hours after the verdict: the John and Taupin camp claim it may be around £5 million; DJM estimate that it won't exceed £500,000. The division of the action's costs also remained undecided at the time of judgement. The industry consensus is that John won a battle, and perhaps several moral victories, but he ultimately lost the war.

Outside the court, Dick James expressed "relief after a marathon" and looked set for around four days' sleep. He died of a heart attack two months later, and his son Stephen said he would never forgive Elton for the pressure he had brought upon his father.

John himself was not present at the judgement, but professed to be happy enough when he heard the news of the verdict shortly before another live show in Scotland. As to his present-day contracts, he admitted that, "I still don't read them".

Gilbert O'Sullivan fared hugely better when he took on the Management Agency & Music company (MAM) in a case that lasted from 1975 to 1985, and in which he also claimed vastly unfair publishing treatment and demanded the return of his copyrights.

In fact, he scooped the pool, winning back not only his songs, but also a pension for life of around £1,983,000. Which wasn't bad for a few corny nasal moans about love and loneliness. MAM, the company owned by manager-star Gordon Mills, responsible also for the success of Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdinck and Lynsey de Paul, had seemingly done an awful lot of wrong.

It had signed O'Sullivan not only to recording and publishing deals but to agency and management contracts as well, and within months of first February 1970 signing, O'Sullivan was not only recording with Mills as a producer, but had entered the Wonderful World of Mills, never seemingly to return to normal life again. He moved into a cottage in his manager's grounds, became a protégé to be introduced to Mills's friends and business colleagues, and developed a

close, loving relationship with Mills's wife, mother, and one-year-old daughter, Clair. "I'd lost respect for everyone in the record industry before I met Gordon," O'Sullivan said at the time. "Now he's the only person who's had any influence on my life." Years later he told the Daily Mail he felt he had a "father and son relationship" with Mills.

And if that wasn't enough, he began to have his first hits as well. The single *Nothing Rhymed* charted in December 1970, reached number eight, and eventually sold 350,000 copies. It was followed by *Under The Blanket, We Will, No Matter How I Try, Alone Again (Naturally)* and many more, all similarly successful. All were produced by Mills, later to be named Music Week's top single producer of 1972.

The problem was, his publishing contract was a rotten one signed without legal advice. "When I signed I didn't even look at it," said O'Sullivan a few months later. "If you respect somebody, and they're going to manage you, then you have to trust them..."

At the end of 1972, MAM reported 1971-2 pre-tax profits of £2½ million, and in mid 1973 Mills announced that the company had bought its own jet plane for £700,000 to wing O'Sullivan, Jones and Humperdinck to their concerts.

O'Sullivan's own purchases were significantly less spectacular. Royalties seemed to take an age to materialize, and he lived day-to-day on what appeared to be a salary provided by MAM. Mills's companies covered all his living expenses (and then detracted them from his earnings) and initially paid him only £10 a week. The figure rose to £150 a month at the peak of his early-seventies' success, but O'Sullivan later recalled how he was reprimanded for spending £1,000 on a brass bed. He was told, too, that he couldn't afford the £95,000 house he planned to buy near Mills's home in Weybridge, and so would have to borrow. O'Sullivan considered it strange: his debut album, *Himself*, had sold almost a million and grossed MAM £2 million. He questioned his royalties, but Mills "like a schoolmaster, gave me a good rolicking for going behind his back". And even that was okay for a while. O'Sullivan reasoned that he was still living in luxury unimagined during his comparatively tough Irish childhood with five brothers and sisters, and the royalties, though hardly enormous, did at least seem to come through eventually.

Though O'Sullivan remained unaware of sales figures and grosses at the time, some sample splits now expose the size of his financial dilemma. The *Alone Again (Naturally)* single sold over 2 million copies, and grossed around £900,000. Of this, O'Sullivan received only £28,000. His second album, *Back To Front*, sold over 3 million copies, grossed £1,700,000, and netted O'Sullivan just £60,000. And the *Clair* single sold 1½ million, grossed £600,000, and earned O'Sullivan just £21,000.

In court in 1982, O'Sullivan emerged not only with a huge award but also with all his copyrights back – the

first time this had ever been achieved. There had been no independent legal advice and hence severe inequality of bargaining power and a restraint of trade, said Mr Justice Mars-Jones. There was also an insuperable conflict of interest. And the documents examined in court showed O'Sullivan had been like "putty in a craftsman's hands".

An appeal lessened the extent of the award, but O'Sullivan still emerged victorious. And shortly afterwards he could be found attempting to settle a new deal with a major company. The negotiating methods would be different from the ones of fifteen years earlier, but the aim was the same: sign the deal, sell the product, and make Number One. This time, too, he swore he wouldn't get done.

Even the gleaming Sting, a mature teacher, got stung

– and he *had* taken legal advice. He had signed with Virgin Music in 1976, aged 24. He was still based in his native Newcastle, then in his jazz band Last Exit, and had received scant interest from several other companies who had also heard his demo tapes. Carol Wilson, at the time Virgin Music's general manager, enthused against the run of play, and signed him to a 50:50 split on a five-year deal. "I thought the man was a star and I loved his songs," Wilson remembers. "We became great friends – he used to do his demos in my loft."

Even in 1985 Wilson considered the terms to have been quite fair in the circumstances, not least because she claims she spent much Virgin time and money in an effort to get him a recording deal.

Sting joined The Police and signed a short-term contract with manager Miles Copeland's illegal Records some eighteen months later. *Fall Out*, the band's first single, sold well for an independent but pulled in relatively little publishing money, and it was only after the first A&M single *Roxanne* began charting high in America that the details of the split first came under close scrutiny. Terms improved to 60:40 after the UK success of *Roxanne* some months later, and in early 1982 stood at 75:25.

The eleven-day July 1982 trial centred on Sting's inequality of bargaining at the signing, with the singer claiming damages and a reversion of his copyrights. But it emerged that Sting did receive independent legal advice, albeit from a non-music specialist, and that the contract was subsequently amended considerably from the original. Sting's counsel also claimed that Virgin Music had done little to further his career, a point hotly contested by Carol Wilson. It was a peculiar irony of the proceedings that for much of the time Wilson and Sting sat next to each other and chatted happily. They remain good friends to this day.

The details of the out-of-court settlement have been disclosed by neither party, though the compromise seems to have granted Virgin Music the copyright of one further album (*Synchronicity*) in return for a much higher artist royalty (possibly 90:10). Copyright ownership is also likely to revert back to Sting before 1990.

It was a messy, expensive affair, with Sting's share of the costs alone estimated at £150,000. But it didn't stop there: the week after the trial saw Copeland and Richard Branson in a splendid public row. Copeland told the Daily Mirror that Sting had earned Virgin £5 million for only a £200 outlay. He claimed too that Virgin had always refused to renegotiate the contract.

Branson retaliated in the New Musical Express: "He signed Squeeze to a far worse deal than Sting got from us a year earlier. They got no money and did not take legal advice... we spent over £2,000 on recording demos for Sting's first band... the total money we collected on his behalf was only £1,500,000... I'm boiling mad with the hypocrisy of the situation..."

It was one of the very few times when a detailed industry dispute has turned public. Many in the business considered this a development not to be encouraged.

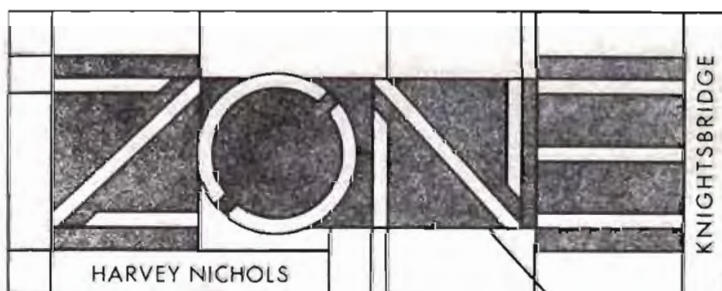
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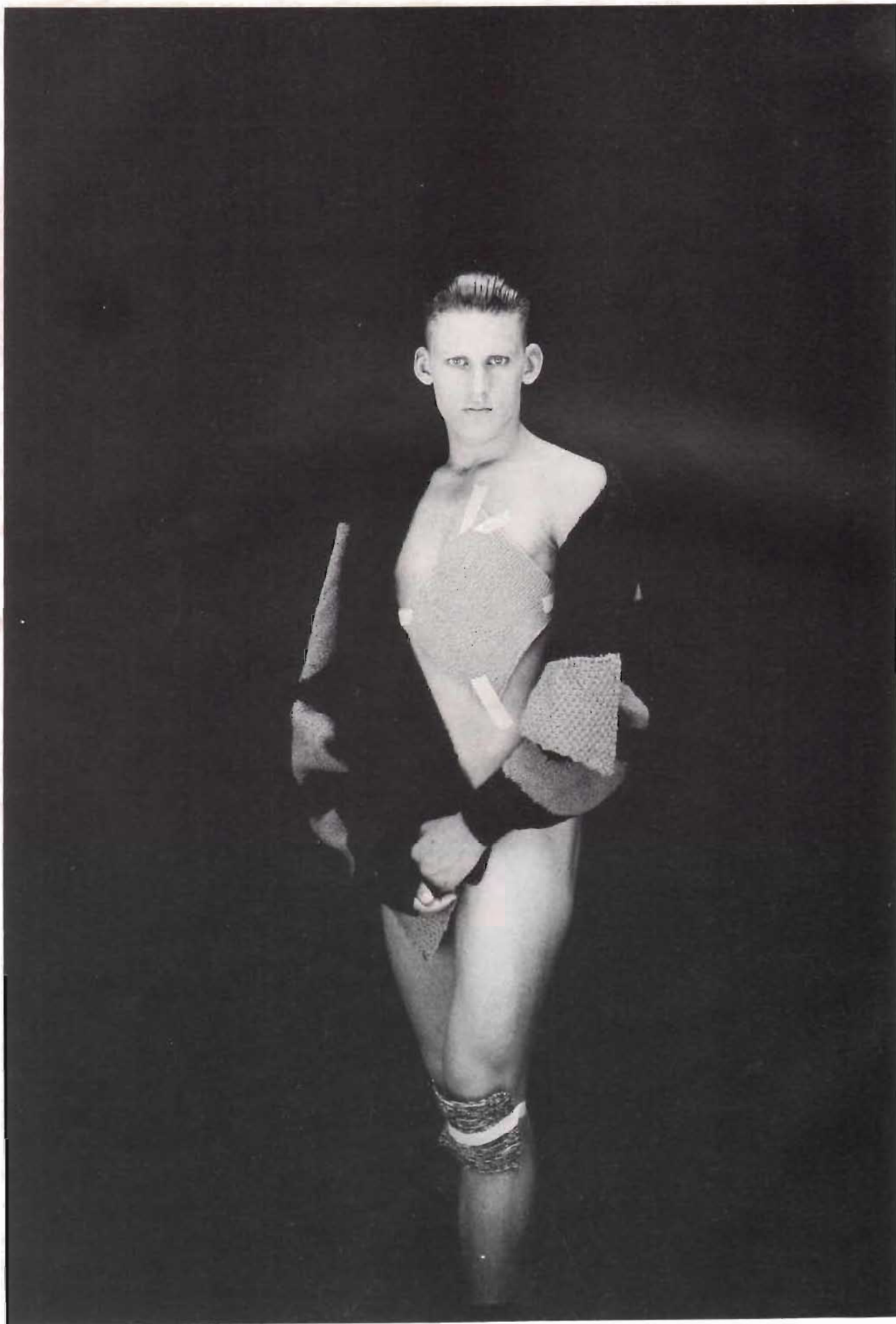


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PUB HAWK!

Suddenly, Wing Commander Tom Wallasey sprang into the mess. "IT'S WAR!!!" he screamed horrifically.

The men mumbled and stirred in their goggles, their scarves dangling heroically in their beer.

Quickly, I stuffed back a lager field and lurched boldly onto the bar. "LADS! PIES! PUBS! PINTS! and SCRAMBLE!!!"

We did it!

Ten planes took off. Magnificently, we flew them up. While I was driving I ripped out a bottle of scotch, tore the head off, and plugged it in.

"AAAAH!" I went. "COMBAT!"

Then, when I woke up, there were Fokkers everywhere. "SHIT!" I screamed and put my foot down. Lead hit my cock pit. I plunged into a cloud. The Fokkers plunged after me. I dove over Dover, flew over France, and landed in London for lunch, but I couldn't shake them off.

Back in the sky they were driving around all over the place. Anyway, later, I got fed up and crashed.

When I woke up I was being punched in the head quarters of the German Army. They wanted my name, rank and number. They got it. **FAST!** Then, the one with the beer opened a bag and took out a leg. My leg. I could tell by the stonk at the top.

What they did to my other leg is enough to make the hairs in my pint stand up.

by

Flight-Lieutenant Douglas Lager DSO in BAR



The End

Seasons Greetings



BACK ISSUES

- 24. SEPT 84** Nick Rhodes; Gary Kemp; Best of BLITZ; Mel Smith; BLITZ/ Olympus Photography competition; Company of Wolves; Tim Roth; Fela Kuti.
- 25. OCT 84** Boy George writes about the media; Neil Kinnock and the selling of the Labour Party; Aztec Camera; Miles Copeland; Nicholas Coleridge; History of the Showroom Dummy.
- 28. FEB 85** Anne Pigalle; Tom Bailey; BLITZ guide to New York; Jean Michel Jarre; Streetsounds; Pet Shop Boys; Paul Morley on Pop Stars and Music Journalism.
- 29. MARCH 85** Paul Young; Katharine Hamnett interview; Steven Berkoff; Terry Gilliam; Dennis Skinner MP; Little Benny; Suzanna Hamilton.
- 30. APRIL 85** Julie Walters; Robert Palmer and the Power Station; The Advertising Industry examined; Yello; Guardian Angels; Tony Doyle; Bill Nelson; Chakk.
- 31. MAY 85** Morrissey interviews Pat Phoenix; Billy Connolly; George Cole; Billy Bragg; Swamplands label; The Untouchables; Los Lobos; Severed Heads; Jesus & Mary Chain.
- 32. JUNE 85** Scritti Politti; Pete Townshend; Nic Roeg & Insignificance; Fine Young Cannibals; Prefab Sprout; Allen Ginsberg; Alex Cox; Stephen Linard; The Woodentops.
- 33. JULY/AUG 85** Billy Idol in New York; Gil Scott-Heron; The selling of Bruce Springsteen; Nicolas Cage; Level 42; Jay McInerney; Shriekback; Maxi Priest.
- 35. OCT 85** The Communards — Jimmy Somerville & Richard Coles; Tom Waits; Alexei Sayle; James Ferman and Film Censorship; Nona Hendryx; Twiggy; Annabella Lwin; The Cloth; Gaby Agis; DC Lee; Brilliant.
- 37. DEC/JAN 86** Mickey Rourke; Pete Murphy; Kevin Rowland & Dexys; David Owen; John Lithgow; Hermes; Eric Bergere; Fabulous Pop Tarts; Float Up CP; Lloyd Cole; Daniel Day Lewis.
- 38. FEB 86** The Kray Twins behind bars; Cannon & Ball; Twisted Sister's Dee Snider; Floy Joy; Fish from Marillion grilled; Death Wish director Michael Winner; Hollywood Babylon II; Obscure Objects of Desire.
- 39. MARCH 86** Lager Wars — the rise & rise of trendy beer; Eddie Shah; John Lydon; the broken bones and torture of Amateur Boxing; Arnold Schwarzenegger; Alan Bleussdale & Bernard Hill; Julie Burchill; Saul Bass; Mark & Syrie; Raymonde.
- 40. APRIL 86** Samantha Fox gets touchy with Paul Morley; Ken Livingstone; Jean Paul Gaultier; Best of the Autumn/Winter fashion collections; Stephen Duffy; Freestyle; Life after Def Jam; Depeche Mode; Derek Jameson; Jamie Reid.
- 41. MAY 86** What next for Vivienne Westwood?; the Blow Monkeys; Glam Revival; Antony Sher; American Football in Britain; Helena Bonham Carter; Jonathan Richman; John Peel.
- 42. JUNE 86** War! Guerrilla tactics in deepest Surrey; Wham — the Paul Morley interview revisited; Gospel's sweet inspiration; Peter Gabriel; Max Wall; Cricket encapsulated; Phil Daniels; Keith Waterhouse; Tim Roth.
- 43. JULY 86** The BLITZ Designer Collection — 21 of the world's top fashion designers restyle the classic Levi's jacket; Daniel Day Lewis; Frank Bruno; Crack; Adventures In The Grand Prix Trade; Calvin Klein; Paul Morley on the World Cup; The Mission; Nancy Cunard.
- 44. AUGUST 86** Paul Morley interviews Norman Tebbit; David Sylvian; Nina Myskowi; Crime as a Career Move; Aswad; The BLITZ Fashion Gala; Willi Smith; Poly Styrene; Graham Fletcher Cook; So It Goes; The Beat Farmers; Charles Bukowski.



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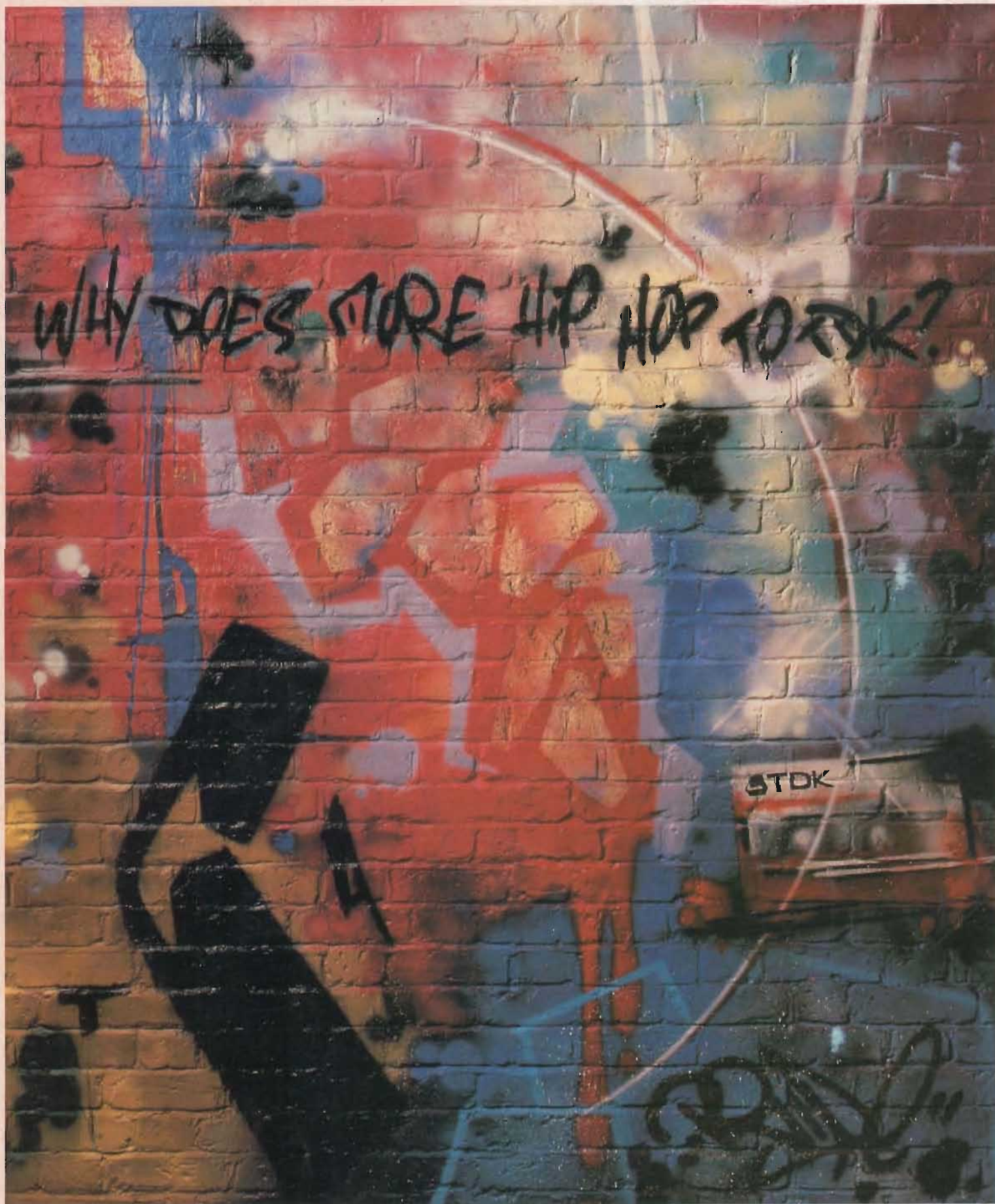
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